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## What goes around, comes around: Trust in the Context of multicultural Leadership

*An empirical interpretative study of trust as a situated relational process between leaders and their employees with bicultural backgrounds*

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# **WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND: TRUST IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP**

**AN EMPIRICAL INTERPRETATIVE STUDY OF TRUST AS A SITUATED  
RELATIONAL PROCESS BETWEEN LEADERS AND  
THEIR EMPLOYEES WITH BICULTURAL BACKGROUNDS**

**BY  
HEIDRUN KNORR**

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2016**



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK



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# WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND: TRUST IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP

An empirical interpretative study of trust as a situated relational process  
between leaders and their employees with bicultural backgrounds

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To Michael and all my friends who assisted and encouraged me throughout this journey!

# 1. INTRODUCTION

*“The typical dilemma faced in international business relationships is that trust is particularly important and, at the same time, particularly difficult to achieve when the partners come from different cultures” (Möllering & Stache 2010:205).*

*“When I am at our sales subsidiaries outside Denmark, I act and behave in the same way as when I am at Headquarters. And I am wondering: How do they [sales personnel of Turkish ethnicity] perceive this? Would they rather have had me act [lead] differently? What [leadership] do they want? With this culture it is really difficult to simply tell me: “I think it was wrong of you to behave like this. Why don’t you do it like this?” I don’t think you can make them say this; if anything, it’s really difficult. You should have worked together with them in for a really, really long time before they say such things. (Interview with head of sales, November 11, 2014.*

*Timestamp: 0:51.20.6 - 0:52.42.0).*

This study aims to explore, describe and explain the phenomenon of trusting as a situated relational process in multicultural leadership. With a sample of multicultural leader-employee relations embedded in the context of an Ethnic Sales Department at a Danish SME which I named “ESAG”, the purpose of this longitudinal case study is to discover the leaders’ and employees’ interpretations and experiences of trusting alongside their perceptions of why and how their trusting changed through time. I expected that the understandings gained from this research would lead to new knowledge which could inform theories on multicultural trust as well as multicultural leadership practices. In this research, I employed an overall hermeneutical approach on a qualitative embedded case study to elucidate the phenomenon to be researched. This case study focuses on 6 purposefully selected multicultural leader-employee relations in their diverse contexts.

What follows is an outline of the background framing this study. Thereafter, I present the problem formulation and the statement of purpose and corresponding research questions. Subsequently, I briefly present and discuss the approach taken to this research, as well as my perspectives and assumptions as researcher. I close the introductory chapter with a presentation and discussion of the motivation and anticipated impact of this research study. Finally, I present an overview on this thesis' structure.

## **1.1 Background**

Research on organizational trust indicates that trust-based work relations lead to a variety of beneficial outcomes for both the employees, leaders, and the organization at large. Drawing on studies by Whitney (1994), Mayer & Davis (1999), and Dirks & Ferrin (2002), Searle & Skinner (2011:3) point out that trust directly influences organizational effectiveness, efficiency and performance. At the level of leader-employee interactions, trust is said to be valuable for the quality of communication and problem solving, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational commitment, team performance, and employee turn-over rate (Gillespie & Mann 2004:588) as well as knowledge sharing (Newell et al. 2007:158).

While scholarly work on trust points to the beneficial outcome of trust, the question as to how trust is built still occupies organizational scholars. Research suggests that achieving a trusting relationship seems to depend on a variety of factors, such as rational judgements (Coleman 1990; Gambetta 1988; Sztompka 1999), feelings of competence to make the right assessment on the trustworthiness of others (Barbalet 1996), and one's upbringing and moral norms prevalent in a certain community and cultural context (Delhey & Newton 2005). Principally, trust research focuses on either of the aforementioned factors with a dominant view on interpersonal trust (e.g., McAllister 1995; Six 2005, Zand 1972) and a tendency to neglect the processual and contextual aspects of trust (see e.g., Möllering 2006; Wright &

Ehnert 2010). The quotes at the beginning of this section, however, seem to point to culture and process as playing an influential role in trust building. Yet, quite surprisingly, research on the influence of cultural factors on trust is still very scarce (Saunders et al., 2010) despite the fact that globalization has led to an intensification of intercultural work relations across business size.

Existing studies aiming at understanding the influence of culture on trust building indicate that trust is understood and built differently across cultures (Zaheer & Zaheer 2006, Saunders et al. 2010). Thus, trust may have universal key aspects such as perceived risk and vulnerability (see e.g. Möllering 2006) but it seems to be enacted and conceptualized in very different ways (see e.g. Mizrachi et al. 2007). Additionally, research on the societal level shows that trust itself as a kind of ‘trust-culture’ (Fukuyama 1995; Sztompka 1999) or institutionalized trust (Kroeger 2013) can lay the conceptual ground for interpersonal trust building. What is more, only very few studies have addressed trust as a process (Khodyakov 2007; Möllering 2006; Nooteboom & Six 2003) let alone a situated relational process (Frederiksen 2014) in which trusting as a situated relational practice is simultaneously influenced by individual agency, the organizational, societal and cultural structures, and the situated relationship. In general, research on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is scarce, even though they comprise “the overwhelming majority (99.8%) of enterprises active within the EU-28’s non-financial business economy (...). More than two thirds (67.1 %) of the EU-28’s non-financial business economy workforce was active in an SME in 2012, some 89.7 million persons” (<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained; economy size class analysis>).

Considering the relatively scarce knowledge on leadership and trust processes in general and in SMEs in particular in light of the hitherto established positive implications of trusting for organizational performance and leader-employee collaborations, this study aims at enhancing the understanding of micro-processes of trust building in the context of multicultural leadership. In order to do so, this research addresses the interplay of structure and agency (Bourdieu 1994; Emirbayer & Mische 1998) as underlying yet overlapping causes for the process of situated

relational trusting between Danish leaders and their employees with ethnic minority Turkish backgrounds in one Austrian and two German sales subsidiaries of ESAG. According to its internal newsmagazine (ESAG News, no. 4; Dec. 2014), sales at ESAG is “going outstanding with new customers constantly approaching us.” ESAG’s economic growth made the company the second most influential ethnic food retailer on the German ethnic food market (Interview HR manager, December 2012). Yet, as presented in the second quote at the beginning of this section, trust in leader-employee interactions at times seems also to be under pressure in some of the case company’s multicultural leader-employee relationships. Since 1999, the case company has had sales activities in the Austrian and German market for ethnic food. In 2012, a fourth sales subsidiary was established in the south-western part of Germany (DE-W) aiming at further strengthening their presence in one of the main markets for ethnic food products within Europe. In order to reach the key customer group of ethnic foods, i.e. Austrians and Germans of Turkish, Syrian, Bulgarian or Romanian origin, the company decided to employ sales personnel of Turkish ethnicity who either were born in Austria or Germany or moved to these countries at an early age. Thus, all sales personnel at the Austrian and German subsidiaries had Turkish and Austrian/German backgrounds, shifting their cultural identities on various occasions. According to the Federal Statistical Office in Germany (<https://www.destatis.de> 2013), 16,5 million people (20,5%) currently living in Germany have a minority ethnic background; 12,8% of them are of Turkish origin of whom many hold a German passport and were born in Germany. A similar situation is stated by the Statistical Office in Austria (<http://www.statistik.at> 2012) where 18.9 % of Austria’s inhabitants have a minority ethnic background with about 14 % having Turkish roots (<http://www.zukunfteuropa.at/site/7216/default.aspx>). Despite the growing number of citizens with dual citizenship and bicultural backgrounds living in Europe, there seems to be hardly any research on trust building in the context of leadership that addresses trust in the light of cultural complexity and shifting cultural identities. While there is consensus across trust researchers that organizations, leaders and followers benefit from trusting relationships, and while there is an understanding that culture influences trust, empirical research on trust

building processes between leaders and their employees with bicultural backgrounds seems to be nonexistent.

In addition, empirical research on trust has often been conducted in laboratory settings (Wright & Ehnert, 2010) or by the use of so-called Trust-Games (Möllering et al., 2004:562) based on Social Exchange Theory (Takahashi et al., 2008). Whereas researchers can find a variety of instruments for measuring trust, such as an inventory for assessing conditions of trust (Butler 1991), 'The Organizational Trust Inventory' (OTI) by Cummings & Bromiley (1996), or the so-called 'Behavioral Trust Inventory' developed by Gillespie (2003), qualitative research on trust is relatively scarce, at least in the field of Organization Science. Experimental and survey studies on trust, however, have severe limitations, at least when studying interpersonal trust as a relational practice (Möllering 2006, Frederiksen 2012) where the individuals' reasonable actions are in focus. Möllering (2006, 2012) argues for more interpretative studies which hitherto have been extremely under-represented in trust research. Following this call, this research took a longitudinal interpretative case study approach to trust building between leaders and employees in the context of multicultural leadership. This study aims to enhance our understanding of trust building in leader-employee relationships situated in real organizational contexts and influenced by their situated interactions, cultural backgrounds and understandings, past experiences and present sense-making.

## **1.2 Problem statement, purpose and research questions**

Seeing that the majority of interpersonal trust research is concerned with the individual's dispositions to trust, the influence of systems on trust or the influence of judgements of trustworthiness on trust, little is known about these aspects' interconnectedness in regard to trust. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of information as to how culture may relate to this 'interconnectedness' of structure, practice and a



given relation as well as little is known about how leaders and employees at SME's maneuver in this complexity.

From a theoretical perspective, the aim of this study is to further our understanding of the complexities of trusting by empirically examining interpersonal processes of trust by addressing the focusing on the influence of socio-cultural structures, here understood as socio-cultural frames sedimented in individual dispositions, on situated relational trust building between leaders and their employees.

Therefore, this study investigates how and when trust emerges from multicultural leader-employee relations and its situated processes over time. I aim to investigate what the relationships look like; what the bases for trust are in these relationships and if/how they change over time. How did trust build up or break down in these very relations? How did the situation contribute to trusting? How did culture influence the situated formation of perception and understanding (practical sense) of social actors from which trusting emerges (or not)? And how do changes in identities – fluctuations, fluidity of identity – influence the processes of trusting, and how do these, in turn, alter the identities and relationships over time? This is not to say that I understand culture or identities to predict behavior but rather to influence an actor's perception and understanding of a relational situation (including its contexts). In terms of trust, it seems to be essential to find out how familiar (Luhmann 1988) or risky a certain situation is perceived to be. It should be noted that the influence of cultural aspects on the development of perception is understood to be a combination of emotional, tacit and cognitive processes (Solomon & Flores 2001), thus referring to aspects of practical sense (Bourdieu 1994) and reflexivity (Emirbayer & Mische 1998).

The objective of my research is thus to obtain a better understanding of the complexity and dynamics of trusting in the context of cultural complexity in organizational settings through discovering and discussing underlying conditions for trust, processes of learning, subjective sense-making, and shifting cultural identifications (Möllering 2011, 2013). In order to grasp this complex interplay of

aforesaid processes in trusting, I employ an overall theoretical framework inspired by Bourdieu's (1994) practice theory, Emirbayer & Mische's (1998) notion of reflexivity and Frederiksen's (2012, 2014) ideas of situated relational trust as the interrelationship between subjective sense-making of the Other and the situation, dispositions in form of socialized structures, and embodied practice and practical sense. These works inspired me to formulate the following three research questions:

1. How did this study's interactants<sup>1</sup> interpret and experience their organizational context and role at ESAG's Department of Ethnic Sales?
2. How did this study's interactants interpret and experience trust in their respective leader-employee relations?
3. Which factors did this study's interactants perceive as helpful, which as hampering, and which as critical to trusting

To answer these questions, the study was conducted as an embedded case study of situated leader-employee relations and their 'practices' of trust building in the context of multicultural leadership in a SME headquartered in Denmark. The main attention was on three Danish leaders (IDK1; IDK2; IDK3) and their relationships with various employees/subordinates<sup>2</sup>, most of whom had Turkish backgrounds. Hence the focus was predominantly on trust-building between individuals (Danish leaders and their predominantly none-Danish bicultural employees) which however also cut across the subsidiary and departmental level at HQs. Nonetheless, at times this study reached beyond these levels as processes of cultural identifications and

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<sup>1</sup> Considering that this study is based on qualitative interviews and observations, I decided to call this study's 'participants' or 'interviewees' for 'interactants' seeing that all empirical material provided to me should be understood as an outcome of 'interactions' between the so-called 'participants' and me, the researcher (see Chapter 4 for further explanations).

<sup>2</sup> The wording of 'follower/subordinate' does not indicate that the so-called 'followers' follow the leader blindly, nor does it indicate that they at all times are subordinate to the leader. Rather, this wording signals that *most of the time*, leader-follower relationships are characterized by unequal power relations with the leaders being more powerful and resourceful especially when it comes to decision-making and information seeking.

“Othering” (Rawls & David 2006) seemingly referred to national levels and even international political discourses.

### **1.3 Assumptions**

Based on my work and internship experiences in MNCs and SMEs and my academic knowledge on intercultural leadership, I made the following assumptions in regard to this study. First, in general, SMEs neither have the resources in terms of manpower, nor the knowledge to develop and implement processes of diversity management. This assumption is based on research on Diversity Management in Europe which indicates that European companies in general do not pay attention to cultural differences in their workforce (Wrench 2009). Second, Danish SMEs are primarily comprised of Danish employees who are used to working within the confines of “Freedom with Responsibility” which fosters or even represents trust. The notion of “Freedom with Responsibility” represents a kind of Danish work philosophy (Casey 2014) which implies that employees should be self-motivated and proactive while having a certain degree of freedom to take responsibility for their work. Third, people with an ethnic minority background are more prone to unemployment and underemployment than persons representing a given country’s ethnic majority which means that, in general, ethnic minority employees would be rather careful to not lose their current position. This assumption is guided by Kahanec et al.’s (2010) research on ethnic minorities in Europe which shows that the unemployment rates for ethnic minorities within the EU are in general much higher than for these countries’ respective majority populations<sup>3</sup>. This could suggest that ethnic minorities in general are more cautious about their practices at work. Fourth, because (mis)trust is a rather sensitive issue, companies and their workforce may be reluctant to provide me access and to share their experiences with me. This assumption rests on my experiences as master student where it showed to be

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<sup>3</sup> The unemployment rates in % relevant for this study’s national contexts are as follows (majority population vs. ethnic minorities): Austria 3.44 vs. 10.09; Denmark: 3.76 vs. 11.74; Germany: 8.13 vs. 19.24 (Source: Kahanec et al. 2010:32)

difficult to find suitable case companies for qualitative studies pertaining to somewhat sensitive subjects such as cultural awareness in leadership.

## 1.4 Thesis Structure

In this thesis, all chapters relate to each other. Inspired by Bourdieu's (1994) Theory of Practice, this thesis investigates the interrelationship and interconnectedness of agency (the part) and the overall structure (the whole) for situated relational trust in the context of multicultural leadership by applying a hermeneutic approach (Gadamer 2004), which is further elaborated in Chapter 4. The empirical part of the thesis consists of six interrelated sections (Chapter 5.1-5.6) which in their unity explicate how individuals' perceptions and actions of trust are interwoven with their *specific capital portfolio* and their position in certain *fields* (for example the *field of ESAG* and the broader *societal field*). At the theoretical level, the dissertation contributes by discussing how Bourdieu's tools (field, habitus, and capital) can be employed in organizational trust research focusing on leader-employee relations.

The thesis is comprised of six chapters.

Chapter Two: Left with fragments: A journey into understandings of 'culture', 'intercultural leadership' and 'trust'. This chapter presents the concepts relevant for this study on trust in multicultural leadership as presented in the respective bodies of literature on culture, leadership and trust. This presentation includes arguments for looking at each concept as a construction simultaneously influenced by individual agency and a given overall structure. These arguments point to the usefulness of this thesis' overall framework inspired by Bourdieu's Theory of Practice.

Chapter Three: Bourdieu's Theory of Practice as theoretical framework for the understanding of trust in the context of multicultural leadership. In this chapter I present an adapted form of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and his main concepts of habitus, field and capital. In addition, this chapter discusses the implications and

limitations of using a framework inspired by Bourdieu for conceptualizing and researching trust in multicultural leadership.

Chapter Four: Methodology. In this chapter, I describe the overall framework as a combination of a hermeneutical approach to an adapted Bourdieusian practice theory. In so doing, I describe and discuss the appropriateness of a longitudinal qualitative case study design for the collection of empirical material on trusting. Next, the case company is presented and it is argued for the choice of this specific case and the leader-employee relations studied within it. Then, the methods of data collection are deliberated upon. In addition, I discuss my approach of operationalizing trust in a qualitative study taking a hermeneutic approach. Then, the method of data analysis is presented in which I argue for the choice of a hermeneutic approach to longitudinal research and the selection of an altered form of Bourdieu's field analysis (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). In addition, this chapter addresses the ethical considerations of doing qualitative research in regard to this study. To conclude, issues of reliability and validity are discussed pointing to the limitations of this study.

Chapter Five: Findings: Conditions, interpretations and experiences of trust in and beyond ESAG. This chapter presents the empirical analysis. The empirical material consisting of exploratory interviews, semi-structured interviews, qualitative observations and secondary data (company website and printed internal magazine) is analyzed in a hermeneutic process. The theories outlined in Chapter 2 and 3 informed data collection while the continuous analysis of the data collected informed the theoretical framework of this thesis. This hermeneutical approach resulted in four interrelated findings that account for the conditions for trust (Sections 5.1 and 5.2) and the influence of leadership practices on interpretations and experiences of trust (Sections 5.3 and 5.4). Together, these sections describe and analyze the leaders' and employees' interpretations and experiences of trusting alongside their perceptions of why and how their trusting changed over time. This chapter concludes with a contextual analysis (Section 5.5) inspired by Bourdieu's

field analysis which ‘summarizes’ the main findings as an interplay of agency and structure within and beyond the case company.

Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion: The interplay of conditions, interpretations and experiences of trust in and beyond ESAG. In this chapter, I discuss the findings in light of relevant literature and research on trust in the context of multicultural leadership. Throughout the discussion I highlight literature supporting my findings as well as highlight new insights into the ways trusting in leader-employee relations is influenced by the interplay of agency and structure. Following the discussion is the conclusion in which I respond to the research questions and problem formulation presented in the introduction. To conclude, suggestions for further research followed by practical recommendations for trust building and maintenance in multicultural leadership I present.



## **2. LEFT WITH FRAGMENTS: A JOURNEY INTO UNDERSTANDINGS OF ‘CULTURE’, ‘INTERCULTURAL LEADERSHIP’ AND ‘TRUST’**

Meeting new people, seeing unknown places, and experiencing other cultures has always been a great interest of mine and has both expanded my horizons and shaped and re-shaped my worldviews. The same is true for my academic journey and thus my understanding of certain concepts and theories. As a person, lecturer, and researcher in the broad field of ‘organizational leadership’, I have been and still am engaged with issues of culture, leadership and trust, all of which – so I learned – can be understood and researched in various ways. In the following, I provide a brief overview of how these concepts have been conceptualized, how they have been researched, the main questions that have been the focus of researchers and, lastly, the results of their research when the abovementioned concepts have been applied in their studies on organizations. However, this brief journey through the vast body of predominantly organizational literature pertaining to ‘culture’, ‘leadership’, and ‘trust’ is not meant to result in an in-depth literature review; its aim is rather to present the growing complexities, ambiguities, and fragmentation of each concept over time. Thus, this chapter describes why I deemed it necessary to turn to practice theory as the main analytical tool for making sense of my empirical material on trust building in the context of intercultural leadership, as I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 3.



## 2.1 Meanings of ‘culture’

Research on culture within organizational settings has predominantly drawn on Geert Hofstede’s (1994, 2001) conceptualization of culture as comprising five dimensions which are said to strongly influence employees’ work-related values, orientation towards their work, and a company’s preferred leadership style, to name but a few (Gesteland 2006; Harris et al. 2004; Hickson & Pugh 1995; Hooker 2003; Yukl 2013). According to Hofstede (1994, 2006), these dimensions describe any culture, which he defines as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category from another” (Hofstede 1994:5). In Hofstede’s view, culture is constructed in onion-like layers with core values and assumptions at the center and rituals, heroes and symbols representing the outer layers. Even though Hofstede’s conceptualization derives from and is predominantly employed in organizational research, his concept of culture refers primarily to national culture, which he understands as ‘overruling’ organizational culture and identity (Guthey & Jackson 2011:167). Similar to Hofstede, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997), Hall (1990) and Schwartz (1999) conceptualize culture as comprising several dimensions and constructed as an onion-like structure. This overall functionalistic understanding of culture, which Osland et al. (2000) call “sophisticated stereotyping”, provides researchers with a tool with which to measure and compare different national cultures. In her often cited work on culture, Smircich (1983:343) classifies this approach to culture as one seeing culture as the *independent variable* leading to “comparative management studies, [in which] culture is considered to be a background factor (almost synonymous with country), an explanatory variable (...) or a broad framework (...) influencing the development and reinforcement of beliefs.” Thus, metaphorically speaking, a given company’s employees ‘convey their (national) culture into the company where it influences practices, understandings and beliefs. In other words, a given national culture directly influences a given organization, including its members. According to Smircich, research taking this approach to culture aims to describe the differences and similarities among cultures, which is then used to provide companies with

suggestions as to how they can heighten their organizational effectiveness; this is exactly what the online resource GlobeSmart is about which is often used by global companies to predict culture-related challenges in cross-cultural collaborations.

A different, yet somewhat related, view of culture is understanding culture as an *internal variable* (Smircich 1983:344), meaning that even though organizations or other groups are embedded in a wider cultural context, they do construct their own characteristic culture and cultural identity, which arguably visualized in its “distinctive cultural artifacts such as rituals, legends and ceremonies.” Smircich argues that this approach understands culture to be the “social or normative glue” (ibid.) binding the organizational system and sub-systems and thus fostering system stability. In summary, culture in this sense is understood to be constructed by the organization itself, i.e. by its members, especially its managers and leaders. Research employing such an approach to culture is mainly interested in how organizations and groups build their characteristic culture from within. Even though research taking this approach acknowledges the organizational members’ “subjective interpretative processes”, it is primarily concerned with how managers can build and change an organization’s particular corporate culture (Kotter & Heskett 1992; Schein 2010). In this respect, Schein (2010) argues that the inner layers of culture, i.e. the basic assumptions (norms, taken-for-granted beliefs, unwritten rules), are harder to change than the outer ones, such as observable artifacts (objects, visible structures and activities), and the espoused values (strategies, goals and philosophies). While scholars such as Kotter and Schein embrace the idea of a ‘strong corporate culture’ as a means of organizational success, other scholars question the mere existence of such a concept as ‘corporate culture’, let alone the possibility of managing it. For example, Sackmann (1992) contests the idea of a homogenous corporate culture in her empirical study on the existence and formation of sub-cultures at a medium sized company. In her study, Sackmann found that several sub-cultures existed at the company with some research participants belonging to several of these simultaneously. Consequently, Sackmann argues that culture is a rather heterogeneous concept. Similar notions can

be found in later works by, for example, Alvesson (2002), Chao & Moon (2005), and Söderberg & Holden (2002), all of which understand organizations not to *have* a certain culture or cultures, but rather to *be* a culture.

Following this understanding, the subsequent conceptualizations of ‘culture’ refer to culture as a root metaphor and draw from modern anthropology, thus leaving “greater room for ambiguity because of culture’s nonconcrete status” (Smircich 1983:347).

Following the branch of *cognitive anthropology*, culture is broadly speaking understood as a cognitive scheme, i.e. “a system of shared cognitions or a system of knowledge and beliefs” (Smircich 1983:348). These systems are understood to be built upon what appear to be rules for behavior, but which are actually “networks of subjective meanings or shared frames of reference that organization members share to varying degrees and which, to an external observer, appear to function in a rule-like, or grammar-like manner” (Smircich 1983:349). The notion of a network which functions in a grammar-like manner, referring to the understandings of language, seems to indicate that even though there appear to be certain underlying rules for how shared frames of reference guide sense-making and social actions, there is at the same time a great variety of possibilities as to how behavior is generated within this ‘grammar’ or these ‘frames of reference’. Hence, I claim that cognitive ‘rules’ or ‘cultural scripts’ can be understood as influencing social actions, including sense-making processes, which in relation to this study are processes of trusting alongside processes of leadership (see Section 2.2 for a discussion of leadership processes). However, these so-called ‘rules’ or ‘scripts’ do not *predict* certain behaviors. As I will discuss in detail (see Chapter 3), I understand social practices, including ‘doing culture’, to be far more complex than suggested in this *cognitive approach*. Researchers taking the cognitive approach to culture are concerned with the understanding of the “rules and scripts that guide action” (Smircich 1983:350), which according to Gibson et al. (2009:50) dominates organizational research. Organizational scholars employing this perspective not only aim to understand underlying ‘scripts’ for actions, but also suggest ways of altering them, which

assumes a central part in research on (multicultural) leadership, as I will discuss in Section 2.2.

Yet another conceptualization of culture is that of culture as a system of shared symbols and meanings rather than ‘rules’, which is why Smircich (1983:350) calls this approach to culture the *symbolic perspective*. The most prominent scholar taking this approach is Geertz (1973), who in his research tried to interpret the “themes” of culture shaping social actors’ behaviors. Referring to Opler (1945:198), Smircich (ibid.) understands these “themes” as “those postulates or understandings, declared or implicit, tacitly approved or openly prompted, that orient and stimulate social activity.” Following the symbolic approach to culture, Alvesson (2002:4) understands culture to exist *between* social actors’ heads as it is a constructive process of meaning interpretation:

*Culture is not primarily ‘inside’ people’s heads, but somewhere ‘between’ the heads of a group of people where symbols and meanings are publicly expressed (...).*

This notion indicates that a shared frame for the understanding and interpretation of symbols, situations, and objects is generated through social interactions and is thus arguably an outcome of relational social practices. Furthermore, this approach suggests that social actors are simultaneously influenced by and creators of diverse cultures, i.e. shared meaning systems. Scholars taking the symbolic approach to culture focus on the analysis of “how individuals interpret and understand their experience and how these interpretations and understandings relate to action” (Smircich 1983:351). A prominent scholar working with this exact issue is Weick (1995, 2001), whose theory of ‘sense-making’ has been widely used by other scholars working within the field of organization studies.

Lastly, Smircich (1983:351) mentions the *structuralist* or *psychodynamic* approach to culture, which understands culture to be an “expression of unconscious psychological processes”. These processes include emotions, such as desire, but also

faiths that emerge when expressed in a certain culture. According to Smircich (1983:352), this approach to culture has been hardly used in organization studies.

In light of these diverse approaches to culture, it is not surprising that scholars reach different conclusions in terms of to what extent culture influences social actors' sense-making and behaviors, i.e. how they make sense of culture in the context of leadership practices or how these are related to the understandings and processes of trust. However, it seems reasonable to conclude that culture partly influences social actors' sense-making and behaviors. Regarding this dissertation, culture may influence what social actors understand under 'leadership' and 'trust' and what they perceive as 'good leadership' and 'trustworthy actions', originating both from themselves and from others (Zaheer & Zaheer 2006). However, culture does not determine behavior, as partly suggested by the cognitive approach to culture. How social actors behave is rather an outcome of a variety of influences which, according to Gibson et al. (2009:46-52), play out on the individual level, group level and the wider situational level. Thus, I conclude that culture can be understood as a multilevel concept which influences social actors in various ways and which social actors draw from, both tacitly and consciously (Swidler 1986), in order to make sense of and react to certain situations, interactions, and objects. At the same time, by doing so social actors take part in the very creation of culture. Moreover, in line with social identity theory (Tajfel 1974), Chao & Moon (2005) argue that social actors have a variety of cultural memberships, i.e. that they can identify with various groups simultaneously. Chao & Moon's approach seems to be promising for my dissertation as they not only show that social actors belong to several cultural 'tiles', as they call them (e.g. belonging to a certain age, gender, ethnicity, nationality; born or living in certain areas such as urban/rural or coastal/inland locations; choosing to belong to certain religious or political groups), they also highlight that these 'tiles' may self-organize into a hybrid identity. The latter is very much the case in my study, where many of my informants understand themselves to be German-Turks or Austro-Turks, which according to Chao & Moon can be understood as its own culture. On the other hand, Chao & Moon state that culture 'tiles' may also act

independently, which they call a ‘compartmentalized identity’. For example, in my case study some of the German-Turks understand themselves as and behave more like Germans at work and Turks at home. Thus, cultural identity could be perceived as a ‘cultural mosaic’ in which ‘tiles’ change in their dominance and composition over time while new ‘tiles’ may emerge. In other words, culture and cultural identity seem to be rather dynamic, fluent, and highly contextual multifaceted and fragmented concepts. The same can be said about the concept of leadership, to which I will turn now.

## **2.2 Understandings of ‘intercultural leadership’**

As hinted at in Section 2.1, culture is understood to partly influence practices and thus also leadership. However, before I discuss the understandings and issues of cross-cultural or intercultural leadership, I will briefly shed some light on the concept of leadership itself.

### **2.2.1 Understandings of leadership**

Leadership is understood in several ways, and at times scholars use the expressions ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ interchangeably, which prompts the question of what the differences between these two concepts are. According to Alvesson (2002), Bjerke (1999), and Alvesson & Svenningsson (2003), management broadly speaking concerns the operation and control of administrative processes, such as planning and organizing. Leadership, on the other hand, “is commonly defined as the process of influencing others in a manner that enhances their contribution to the realization of group goals” (Haslam 2001:58). However, Alvesson (2002:101) perceives ‘management’ and ‘leadership’ as social constructions and thus as outcomes of social interactions combined with situational sense-making processes. Consequently, it can be argued that ‘management’, even though it is almost always labeled as such

(e.g. HR-manager, sales-manager), can also be understood as leadership since “managers affect thinking and feeling in connection to managing specific tasks and goals, thus making ‘leadership’ and ‘management’ difficult to differentiate in practice” (Alvesson 2002:101).

Perceiving leadership as a social construct is just one way of conceptualizing ‘leaders’, their so-called ‘followers’ and leadership itself. The concept of leadership is multifaceted, as is the scope of leadership research, which is why a detailed account is outside the scope of this dissertation. For an in-depth overview on the history and the topics researched within the field of leadership, see e.g. the Sage Handbook of Leadership (Bryman et al. 2011). The aim of this chapter is not to give an in-depth overview, but rather to point out key understandings and research topics and thus to show the current fragmented understanding of the concept of leadership.

Over time, conceptualizations and labels of leadership have changed in tandem with the development of new middle-range theories such as the contingency theory. However, as indicated by Day & Antonakis (2012) different ‘schools of leadership’ (ibid.:6) dominate research at different times, with one school, the trait approach to leadership, being of interest in leadership research at several points in time, which Grint (2011:13) explains by the occurrence of political events such as re-emerging terrorism, uncertainty, and fundamentalism.

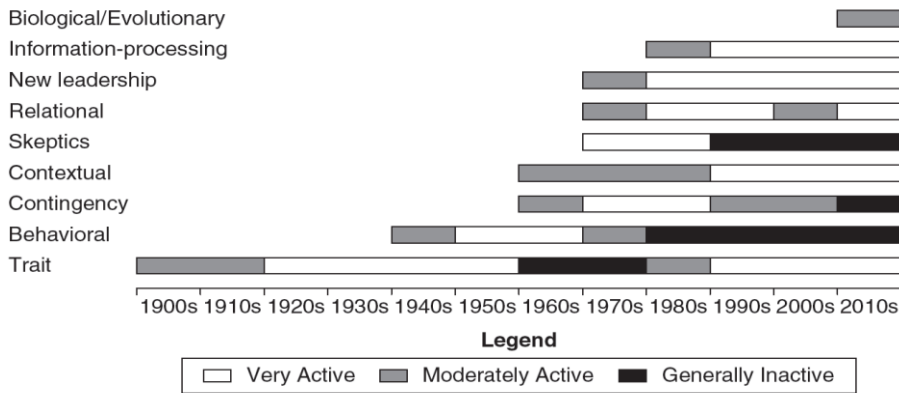


Figure 1: Activities of diverse schools of leadership over time (Day & Antonakis 2012:7)

Briefly, the *trait school of leadership* suggests that leaders are born with a rather stable combination of personality traits that are understood to foster ‘leadership’ such as intelligence, good judgement, and dominance (Day & Antonakis 2012:7; Haslam 2001:59). This approach to leadership, i.e. leaders as “great men”, implies that a leader can almost single-handedly manipulate, control, and orchestrate his ‘followers’ by virtue of his character or charisma (charismatic leadership). This approach can be critiqued for several reasons. First, it does not take actions into account, neither those of the leader nor those of the followers. Second, it seems to entirely neglect the followers’ perceptions and reactions as well as the context and situation in which the leadership takes place.

As the name suggests, the *behavioral school of leadership* primarily focuses on leader behavior and thus on different leadership styles. According to Day & Antonakis (2012:8) and Haslam (2001:59), research taking the behavioral perspective has identified two core activities of ‘effective’ leaders: Consideration and the initiation of structure.



*Consideration relates to a leader's willingness to look after the interests and welfare of those they lead and also to trust and respect them. Initiation of structure relates to the leader's capacity to define and structure their own and their followers' roles with a view to achieving relevant goals. (Haslam 2001:59)*

Leadership focusing on consideration may be labeled as a 'supportive, person-oriented, transformational, or trust-based leadership', while leadership with a focus on structuring may be called 'directed, or task-oriented leadership' (Day & Antonakis 2012:8). As with the aforementioned approach, the behavioral school also neglects aspects of interaction, situation and context, and thus is leader-centered, too. Subsequent research on behavioral 'styles' of leadership have indicated that leaders do not employ one dominant leadership style, but rather that their preferred 'styles' vary across their range of tasks. This research indicated that leaders and leadership should rather be understood and researched in their diverse contexts. Hence, researchers started to leave the person-centered 'one-variable approach' (Haslam 2001:60) and turned to contingency theory.

The *contingency school of leadership* understands leadership as "an interactive product of *both* personal and situational characteristics" (Haslam 2001:60 referring to Gibb 1958). This approach is said to take "leader-member relations, the task structure, and the position power of the leader" (Day & Antonakis 2012:9) into account. More specifically, Haslam points out that the contingency approach can be understood and criticized for its reduction to a "mundane and mechanical matching process" (Haslam 2001:63) as implicitly suggested by Fiedler's (1978) contingency model. According to Haslam (2001:62), Fiedler's research comes to the solution that, very broadly speaking,

*task-oriented leaders are most effective when features of the situation are all favourable (i.e. when relations are good, the task is structured, and the leader has power) or all unfavourable. (...) relationship-oriented leaders are considered more effective in situations of intermediate favourableness.*

Fiedler's approach and the contingency approach in general were short lived, but their initial focus on followers led to another perspective on leadership, the *relational school of leadership*. Since my dissertation also refers to the notion of 'relational leadership practices', I deem it necessary to highlight that the term 'relational' means something very different to me than has been explicated within the leadership literature. The understanding of 'relational' as put forward within the relational approach of leadership should rather be understood as 'interpersonal' since it concerns leader-employee interactions and relationships. My use of the term 'relational', however, refers to Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and thus comprises many more aspects than 'interactions in relationships', as I will outline later (see Chapter 3).

The *relational school of leadership* focuses on the leader-subordinate relationships from which the well-known Leader-Member-Exchange Theory (LMX) emerged. Within this body of research, a leader-subordinate relationship built on trust and mutual respect is understood to be of high quality, yielding more "positive leader outcomes than do lower quality relations, which has been supported empirically" (Day & Antonakis 2012:9). Relationships of low quality are understood to be primarily based on contract fulfillment. The so-called *transactional leadership* is a prominent example of leadership understood along the lines of relations that emphasize the quality aspect of relations between leaders and other organizational members. As a kind of side-effect of this approach, organizational researchers discovered the "importance of the followers in the leadership process" as these are the ones confirming and authorizing the leader (Haslam 2001:63). The *transformational approach* is yet another understanding of leadership which partly draws on the idea of the *charismatic leader (trait school of leadership)* and the *relational school* (placing emphasis on *followership*), which is why Hollander (1995, cited in Haslam 2001:64) sees transformational leadership as "an extension of transactional leadership, in which there is greater leader intensity and follower arousal." The task of transformational leadership is to "identify and ultimately provide the path for satisfaction of subordinates' goals, while at the same time

ensuring that those goals are compatible with those of the group or organization as a whole” (Haslam 2001:64). An important outcome of the research done in light of the relational approach is that leadership is as much about the leader as it is about the followers and their perception of the leader, which includes the specific situation as well as the leader’s and followers’ characteristics, behaviors and relationships.

Following a *social identity approach to leadership*, which arguably constitutes a *new leadership approach* (see figure 1), Haslam (2001:65-71) pointed out that leadership is a group-process rather than an individual act. Referring to Hogg (1992), Haslam (2001:70) argues that effective leadership is only possible if the leader is part of a “cohesive and purposeful group [whose] properties are themselves largely a product of shared social identity.” Notwithstanding the existence of charismatic leaders, Haslam (2001:70; italics in original) furthermore employs identity and categorization theory to explain that “[l]eadership is thus *conferred* by followers and charisma is an *expression* of the leader-group dynamic as perceived by those followers in a specific context.”

Extending the aforementioned approaches, Svenningsson et al. (2012:71) embrace what I might call a *processual approach to leadership* or *fragmented leadership*, which they understand to be

*(...) a complex social process in which the interpretations of what is said and done are crucial. Assumptions, values, and norms on a variety of levels – societal, organizational, and group – frame and guide both expectations and evaluations of what is considered ‘good’ leadership.*

Following Svenningsson et al. (2012), leadership is a constant identity work and not a coherent process in which leaders adhere to a certain leadership style and followers mechanically react to their leader’s actions. Rather, leaders adopt diverse and fragmented styles, which could be said to emerge from the complex situated leader-follower interactions. Certainly, ‘leadership’ then seems to offer a ‘repertoire’ of leadership styles, which leaders use either reflexively or habitually while enmeshed

in situated relational leadership practices. In this view, leaders and their followers co-create leaders, followers, and leadership and thus both contribute “(...) to a shared definition of reality within a group (...)” (Svenningsson et al. 2012:80). Even though leadership positions can be understood to depend on the dynamics of the interpersonal interactions and thus may shift, in general, leaders have more influence on their followers than vice versa (ibid.). Svenningsson et al.’s (2012) notion of ambiguity and fragmentation of leadership styles and their conceptualization of leadership as a situated relational practice influenced by power asymmetries are useful in understanding the various dynamics at play when leaders execute leadership in an intercultural context. This is significant in my study for several reasons. First, the leader-follower relationship in itself is characterized by the unequal distribution of power in terms of their organizational positions and thus the resources available to them (Mizrachi et al. 2007; Schweer 2008b). Second, in this study the relationships between Danish leaders and their followers with Turkish backgrounds take place within a wider web of power relations that goes beyond differences in organizational roles as they are also influenced by the leaders’ and followers’ ethnicity, religion, language use, level of education, and gender. Third and foremost, Svenningsson et al.’s conceptualization of leadership implies that leadership is not static but emerges in situated interactions and is thus continuously shaped and re-shaped as so-called ‘followers’ make sense of certain behaviors in light of their cultural frames or dispositions and their settings within the field of ethnic sales. Hence, what is understood as ‘good’ leadership or leadership based on trust is an identity-based construction of the social actors’ practical sense and situated relational sense-making in light of prior experiences, certain dispositions, and cultural frames. Following this thought, a leader displaying fragmented and diverse leadership styles, such as employing freedom on one hand and exercising severe control on the other, can be made sense of in various ways. In other words, whether such a fragmented style can be understood as unpredictable or untrustworthy leadership, or even leadership at all, is in the eye of the beholder.

### 2.2.2 Understandings of intercultural leadership

Combining the complex concepts of culture and leadership discussed above leads us to understandings of cross-cultural, intercultural or multicultural leadership, which differ according to the approaches taken to culture and leadership. If leadership is seen as a social activity and an organizational process, then it makes sense to suggest that culture may influence this process. Alvesson (2002:101) conceptualizes any leadership as cultural:

*[L]eadership is per definition seen as 'cultural', that is leadership must be understood as taking place in a cultural context and all leadership acts have their consequences through the (culturally guided) interpretation of those involved in the social process in which leaders, followers and leadership acts are expressed.*

According to Guthey & Jackson (2011:165f), almost all studies within the field of cross-cultural leadership aim to describe, understand, and analyze how leaders are influenced by the cultural context in which they are immersed. This influence is often portrayed rather deterministically with culture constraining leadership actions. However, as I have argued earlier, when abandoning the functionalistic understanding of culture it can be conceptualized as a type of 'toolbox' (Swidler 1986) from which social actors can draw a variety of cultural tools and thus culture may *enable* actions. Nevertheless, the majority of cross-cultural leadership research takes a functionalistic approach to culture (Hofstede) and is thus concerned with the measurement of the impact of cultural variables on leadership processes. To some extent, the same is true for the well-known and influential study by House et al. (1999): the GLOBE project.

Based partly on Hofstede's dimensions, Project GLOBE measured 61 nations on 7 dimensions with the aim of understanding the influence of culture on leadership (House et al. 2002). This has become an important issue in conjunction with businesses becoming more internationalized and globalized (Adler 2008). The most noticeable online 'leadership tool' taking advantage of the findings by Hofstede and

House et al. is an online resource called GlobeSmart which, according to its website (2015), aims to increase the ‘cultural agility’ of its clients. The company states that “[m]ore than 140 companies have made GlobeSmart a key component of their cross-cultural training efforts, including approximately 30% of Fortune 100 companies” (<http://www.aperianglobal.com/learning-solutions/online-learning-tools/globesmart/>). This statement mirrors the extent to which the functionalistic understandings of culture and leadership still dominate organizational thought in both practice and academia (Doney et al. 1998; Guthey & Jackson 2011). In line with studies such as the GLOBE project, later organizational research tends to explain the preferences for leadership styles based on the national dimensions laid out by Hofstede, Trompenaars, and House et al. For example, Dickson et al. (2003), who based their research on Hofstede’s dimension, argue that Danish leaders favor a participative leadership style since Denmark is a nation with a rather low power distance, and thus favors egalitarianism. Without jumping to conclusions, I shall remark here that the Danish leaders taking part in my study exercise a participative leadership style only to some extent, indicating that there is some ‘truth’ in Svenningsson et al.’s understanding of fragmented leadership. In a more restrained form, Muczyk & Holt (2008), taking a contingency approach to leadership, argue that an autocratic leadership style is more often found in countries representing a high power distance, such as in Turkey.

The issue of how culture may influence leadership practices leads to research on expatriates, and thus also to leadership in culturally foreign contexts. Taking Hofstede’s dimensions or House et al.’s findings as a point of departure, a great proportion of cross-cultural leadership studies has been concerned with how leaders can adjust to foreign contexts. As mentioned earlier, culture can be understood as a cognitive scheme or cultural script. This implies that once scripts have been identified, social actors can adapt to them or at least modify their own behavior accordingly; in other words, they can attempt to go ‘local’. How leaders can adapt to foreign cultures is a key question for organizational scholars working with issues of cultural adaptation or acculturation. Partially referring to Weick’s (1995) sense-

making theory, they suggest that leaders develop intercultural competencies (Aarup Jensen 1995; Byram et al. 2001), a global mindset (Gupta & Govindarajan 2002; Levy et al. 2007), or cultural intelligence (Ang et al. 2006; Ang et al. 2007; Early 2002; Earley & Ang 2003; Earley & Mosakowski 2004; Earley & Peterson 2004; Earley et al. 2006; Plum 2008; Thomas 2006; Thomas et al. 2008). The majority of this research draws on cognitive and leader centered approaches to intercultural leadership, and thus to some extent neglects the followers' reactions to the leaders' acculturation or adaptation, let alone the situational and wider contextual circumstances. Reacting to this and in line with the relational approach to leadership, Thomas (2008:162) points out that a leader cannot expect to be successful simply by adapting his or her leadership style to a certain cultural context. Rather, the leader's ability to influence others depends on how the subordinates make sense of the leader's behavior and whether or not they perceive the actions to be genuine.

Guthey & Jackson (2011:172-176) furthermore critique the vast body of cross-cultural leadership research for its 'etic' approach to culture, as it is almost always conducted using self-reported survey studies. They argue, however, that this approach cannot do justice to globalization since it perceives culture to be a rather stable and static concept which restrains leadership practices. In order to understand the influence of globalization on leadership and culture, Guthey & Jackson point out that more emic research built on ethnographic approaches (see e.g. Ailon-Souday & Kunda 2003) is needed to better understand the concepts of culture and leadership, including the complexity of its relationship. Thus, sense can be made of how leaders and followers together are shaped and shape culture in all its forms, including through 'creolization' and 'hybrid' cultures.

*The phenomenon of creolization, the story of cultural polyglot leaders (...) and the insights of the sort provided by Galit Ailon (...) all demonstrate emphatically why research on leadership and culture needs to move beyond the quantitative models provided by Geert Hofstede and the GLOBE project (...) [as such, research] can construct a vocabulary to help leaders and followers understand and participate in*

*the dialectical process whereby they shape the culture that shapes them, and so on.*  
(Guthey & Jackson 2011:175)

In summary, the vast body of literature on cross-cultural, intercultural and/or multicultural leadership is concerned with how leaders can influence others with various cultural backgrounds in such a way that they work together towards an overall organizational goal in the most effective and efficient way possible. This issue is dealt with in different ways, which include attempts at cultural integration, segregation, adaptation, utilization, and inclusion. However, even though organizational scholars employ a variety of approaches to the concepts of culture and leadership, as discussed in both this and the previous chapters, the majority of research within the field of cross-cultural leadership is still conducted against the backdrop of a functionalistic paradigm, which arguably fails to embrace the complexities and ambiguities inherent to the concepts of culture and leadership and their relationship with each other. A somewhat similar picture can be depicted within the body of trust research, which I will turn to now.

## **2.3 Conceptualizations of ‘trust’**

According to the body of literature on leadership and organizational trust, trust building and maintenance is a key issue in leadership practices, including intercultural leadership (see e.g. Gillespie & Mann 2004; Javidan et al. 2010; Li 2013). Not surprisingly, the literature on trust is as diverse as the writings on culture and leadership discussed above, and scholars of trust research have so far favored understanding trust as a concept which can be measured in leaders using survey data. Cross-cultural research on trust in organizations thus often relies on Hofstede’s conceptual framework of national culture in order to suggest how leader ‘A’ from cultural context ‘X’ can best build trust with employee ‘B’ from cultural context ‘Y’. In other words, empirical trust research taking an emic and processual approach to culture and leadership is scarce, with some exceptions such as Mizrachi et al. (2007), Möllering & Stache (2010), and Perry (2012).



In general, the literature on interpersonal trust is highly dominated by scholarly work on propensities to trust and justifications for trust, which in turn are based on perceived familiarity. Key works addressing these issues are presented in the following sections.

### **2.3.1 Justifications for trust: Trust as a rational choice**

Trust as based on rational choice (Coleman 1982, 1990; Dasgupta 1988; Gambetta 1988; Sztompka 1999; Hardin 2002) and exchange theory (Blau 1964; Yamagishi et al. 1998) are still the most prominent approaches to understanding trust. Conceptualizing trust as being based on reason, in short, implies that the trustor is able to decide whether or not a trustee is trustworthy. Hence, trust is understood as a predominantly rational and cognitive phenomenon; thus, it is enacted in a conscious manner and only when the calculated risks are smaller than the expected benefits. In other words, the trustor's decision to bestow trust on another person is primarily based upon the trustor's aims and the information regarding the trustee and the given situation. An important aspect of this information is the notion of 'subjective probability'. According to Gambetta (1988b), we trust, or judge to be trustworthy, those who are least likely to betray our trust. The question then becomes what the signs of perceived trustworthiness are.

In the literature, a variety of antecedents and signals of trust has been discussed. Three potential antecedents of interpersonal trustworthiness have been continuously suggested throughout the Western literature: ability, benevolence, and integrity (Mayer et al. 1995). Even though trust researchers have variously named these concepts, they all refer to Mayer et al.'s concepts of ability, benevolence, and integrity (McKnight & Chervany 2001-2002; Renn & Levine 1991).

In terms of antecedents of trust, Mayer et al. (1995) point to the notion of '*trustworthiness beliefs*' regarding the trustee. They argue that the trustor's decision

to trust depends on how the trustor perceives the trustee's abilities (skills, competencies, and characteristics), benevolence (the perception of a positive orientation of the trustee towards the trustor, and an expression of genuine concern and care), and integrity (the perception that the trustee adheres consistently to a set of principles acceptable to the trustor, such as honesty and fairness). However, since people have different perceptions regarding what signifies integrity and benevolence, a potential trustee could be judged as trustworthy by one person and untrustworthy by another. A similar notion can be found in Schweer's theory (2008a; 2010); arguably, his concept of an 'implicit theory of trust' mirrors an individual's mental frame that guides the sense-making of situated interactions and trustworthiness beliefs. Making rational judgments about whether a trustee is to be trusted or not seems to be even more challenging when the interaction takes place in an unfamiliar context, for instance in intercultural situations. Möllering (2008:99) posits that in such situations, the trustees' intentions, interests, and trustworthiness are even less clear or predictable than in a situation familiar to the trustor.

### **2.3.2 Justifications for trust: Trust as 'modus operandi'**

In contrast to trust as a cognitive- and/or affect-based trust, in which information and, to some extent, emotion processing play a vital role, trust may also be understood as 'a habit' or an 'automatic program'. According to Möllering (2006: 52), "the main point is that the routine is performed without questioning its underlying assumptions, without assessing alternatives and without giving justifications every time." Nevertheless, trust can still be reasonable and make sense to a certain trustor; it is just based on habitual actions. Arguably, 'regular behavior' is grounded in the situational knowledge of what can be expected in a certain context. In other words, since individuals are social beings, and thus belong to a variety of social groups, trust could be understood as an "unconscious" action based on individual repertoires and their practical sense, which embrace cognitive,

affective and bodily repeated and affirmed performances (Bourdieu 1977). Thus, social groups contain routines for actions which influence group members, but which are also influenced by these members. In organizations, for example, routines for actions – including trusting – may be framed by ‘stable’ systems, such as rules, regulations or the organizational culture, which may provide a sense of ‘how we do things around here’ (Alvesson 2002). Moreover, employees fulfill certain roles, and in a given system we may expect the employee to enact his or her role/profession competently. An example of this is ‘swift trust’, which has been researched in temporary systems including project groups. Meyerson, Weick & Kramer (1996) found that when employees interact primarily according to their roles (tasks and specialties), and not their personalities, then swift trust can be established quite easily. Thus, if organizations are viewed as being comprised by ‘role performing employees’ they may be perceived as less complex and more predictable. As indicated, stable systems seem to enable predictability, and thus trust, as long as they feature familiarity and continuity (Becker 2005, as cited in Möllering 2006:53). Following this thought, systems such as organizations may assist in trust building between social actors, while at the same time also turning into entities of trust. Hence, social actors may feel that they are able to predict each other’s actions based on the rules present at their common workplace and, therefore, may enact a ‘taken-for-granted’ trust. Möllering (2006:70), however, points to the limits of trust based on perceived structural stability when arguing that “rules, roles and routines are bases for trust in so far as they represent taken-for-granted expectations that give meaning to, but cannot guarantee, their fulfilment in action.”

Since social actions cannot be predicted even though they are embedded in rules, roles and routines, what happens if the system loses its stability, reliability or reputation, or the trustor has to face unfamiliar contexts in which he or she does not know what can be taken for granted? Arguably, in these cases the social actor has to become ‘active’ and work on developing a familiarity with the new context in order to test whom to trust with what, how to trust (i.e. testing whether incorporated routines of trust still lead to a favorable outcome), and to what extent to trust.

### 2.3.3 Trust as relationship

Trust as a relationship, broadly speaking, understands that social actors and structure mutually influence each other. In general, the literature on interpersonal trust with a relational perspective is scarce; however, Wright & Ehnert (2010), Seligman (1997), Möllering (2006, 2012), and Frederiksen (2012, 2014), for example, refer to trust as emerging from relationships and thus, to some extent, understand trust to be a situated relational process. For example, Frederiksen (2014:179) posits that trust emerges from the process of the situated aligning of practical sense as understood in Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. According to Frederiksen (ibid.) "[a]ligning means that the practical sense of each of the interacting parties adapts and takes the other parties and their conceptions of the situation into consideration." Hence, the process of aligning may support trust building as it is assumed that social actors create trust from a very situated relationship by "bringing into correspondence their conceptions of the situation, their purposes and meaningful actions" (ibid. 180). The process of aligning as described here seems to resonate with Lewicki & Bunker's (1996) notion of identification based trust (IBT), which I shall return to shortly. In addition, it can be argued that literature pertaining to trust from a cultural perspective implicitly touches upon the notion of aligning and alignment when highlighting the importance of "cultural sensitivity" (Shapiro et al. 2008), "adaptability" (Early et al. 2006), "code-switching" (Molinsky 2007), or "reflexivity and creativity" (Möllering 2006) in the building of relationships and trust. However, as stressed by Frederiksen (2014:180), the idea of trust as a relationship means that trust is an outcome of that very relationship and not simply because social actors are willing to "act in the interest of the other", which is arguably the main idea of Hardin's (2002) notion of "encapsulated interest". In summary, I understand trust to be a *situated relational process* that emerges during the *process of relationship building*, in which individuals strive to *co-create a shared understanding* of the situation in which they find themselves. This understanding, methodologically speaking, highlights the

importance of empirical studies that take an emic and ethnographic approach to trust research in order to grasp the aspects of *ongoing situated relational interactions* in the context of intercultural leadership.

#### **2.3.4 Trust and reflexivity**

If trust has to evolve within a setting without predicated (institutionalized) rules, then social actors have to learn to trust each other in a process of interaction in which common experiences, knowledge and rules are developed over time (Möllering 2006:77f). Thus, trust changes over the course of interactions based on reflexivity. According to Möllering (2006: 10), interactions may start off “relatively blindly or accidentally, but then there is a possibility that they become self-reinforcing.” Thus, Möllering claims that trust should be understood as a process (Möllering 2006) or a process of processes (Möllering 2013), thus indicating that trust is a highly contextual and variable concept (see also Frederiksen 2012). Moreover, trust in this sense is concurrently the condition for a relationship, a co-operation, and a process of interaction as well as the outcome of it, as pointed out by Nooteboom (1996). With reference to Giddens’ notion of ‘active trust’ (Giddens 1994b referred to in Möllering 2006:79), Möllering suggests that trustors can not only wait for the right conditions to trust, as argued by Nooteboom, they can also work actively on trust, i.e. they can choose to “engage in extensive signaling, communication, interaction and interpretation in order to maintain the continuous process of trust constitution.” It is important to point out, though, that Möllering acknowledges that this process is uncertain and may also lead to undesirable outcomes or failures of trust. Thus the process of trusting is characterized by alterations, yet is usually considered to grow gradually over time. Throughout this process, the trustor can ‘choose’ to play an active role in order to foster trust building, while at the same time being unable to absolutely control this very process.

Hence, trust building can also be explained as being based on agency and reflexivity. Thus, 'choosing' to trust and initiating active trust as the first step in the aligning process may also originate from conscious choices (see e.g. Mizrachi et al. 2007; Perry 2012) which are, however, influenced by an individual's habitus, the unfolding relationship and the context/situation. Hence, the relational process of trusting cannot be separated from trust as disposition. The existing literature on relational trust, however, seldom conceptualizes trust as being influenced by both habitus, i.e. dispositions guiding perceptions of familiarity and justifications, and practical sense, i.e. relationship processes. Rather, as argued by Frederiksen (2014), trust is researched as the individual experience of alignment (Hardin 2002; Misztal 2011; Sztompka 1999, referred to in Frederiksen 2014) when speaking of "taking others' interests into account" (Hardin 2002), "accepting vulnerability" (Misztal 2011) or "accepting risk" (Sztompka 1999).

As mentioned by Frederiksen (2014:185), to date few works exist that treat trust as a process emerging from the process of "confidently relying on the generative capacity of the relationship."

In summary, the main questions posed by trust researchers are how trust can be conceptualized, built, maintained and re-built between trustor and trustee, both of which can be individuals, groups of people, organizations, institutions, or other objects. These questions have been researched within and across the aforementioned trustor-trustee relationships, with only a minor yet growing body of literature taking a cultural perspective on trust (for an overview, see Saunders et al. 2010). The latter body of literature, however, is dominated by a functionalist perspective on trust, even though scholars have pointed out that trust changes over time, while one of the main questions in trust research addresses the issues of its development.

### 2.3.5 Trust development

Research suggests that more often than not trust is initiated by so-called “blind action”, i.e. unintended or unplanned behavior. Axelrod (1984, in Möllering 2006) states that such behavior may lead to desirable interactions which would have been difficult to establish when based on conscious actions. In the same vein, Gambetta argues that “*it can be rewarding to behave as if we trusted, even in unpromising situations*” (Gambetta 1988d, in Möllering 2006), which leads Möllering (2006) to infer that social actors have the ability to learn to trust. Thus, the initial step into a trusting relationship seems to be either the outcome of a ‘blind action’ (see Axelrod 1984) or the active and partly unconscious and non-rational choice of an actor to initiate ‘as-if-trust’ (see Hardin 1993). In conclusion, by drawing on Luhmann (1979) and Sztompka (1999), Möllering (2006:82f) argues that ‘as-if-trust’ or ‘blind trust’ can be understood as irrational in itself, while at the same time the act of choosing to trust can be functional and thus a rational way of dealing with complexity and uncertainty.

Once the trust process has been initiated, the common view in the literature is that it will continue to grow over time (see e.g. Shapiro et al. 1992, Lewicki & Bunker 1996, Lewicki et al. 1998). As previously pointed out, ‘as-if-trust’ or ‘blind trust’ may initiate the trust building process. The continuation of this process can be explained by Luhmann’s notion of the ‘principle of gradualness’ (Luhmann 1979, referred to in Möllering 2006), which encapsulates the idea that trustors choose to trust step by step, and thus extend their trust in relatively small steps. From a Bourdieusian perspective, Luhmann’s notion of ‘gradualness’ can be explained by the process of aligning practical sense, which enables trust to emerge from the ongoing relationship.

In general, scholars argue that trust building is mainly based on repeated positive experiences (e.g. Schweer 2008b; Zand 1972; Lewicki & Bunker 1996; Zucker 1986). For instance, Zucker’s (1986) concept of ‘process-based trust’ points to the

importance of relational experiences in trust building and thus, to some extent, seems to resonate with the notion of alignment. In short, process-based trust can be conceptualized as a ‘history of exchange between two social actors’, including the expectation of reciprocity. Yet, as stated in Möllering (2006:88f), Zucker found that in modern societies ‘process-based trust’ has been replaced by ‘institution-based trust’ since recurring face-to-face interactions which facilitate ‘process-based trust’ no longer dominate modern societies characterized by socially and geographically dispersed actors. The same seems to be true for organizational members and, thus, for trust building between leaders and their (dispersed) followers. At the same time, Zucker points to the importance of ‘process-based trust’ as a significant mode of trust building. Building on Zucker’s and Lewicki & Bunker’s models of trust, Nooteboom (2003) claims that trust can be learned in ongoing interactions by developing empathy and identification, i.e. that emotional elements of trust are understood as being essential to trust building (see also Lewis & Weigert 1985).

Lewicki & Bunker (1996) presented the most prominent model of trust development, which seems to combine the aforementioned ideas of trust as a process. Based on Shapiro et al.’s (1992) model, they propose a model of trust development in interpersonal work relationships in which higher levels of trust are reached over time by successively running through three different yet overlapping stages or variants of trust (see figure 2): First, calculus-based trust (CBT), then knowledge-based trust (KBT) and, lastly, identification-based trust (IBT).



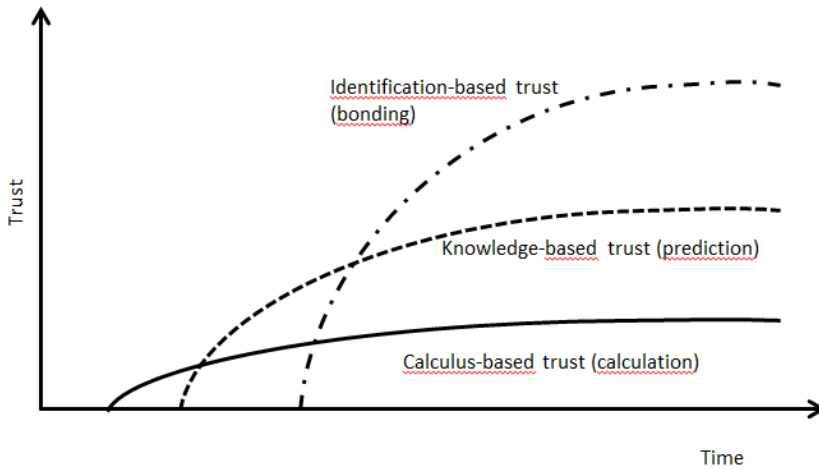


Figure 2: Graphic representation of the development-based model (Lewicki & Bunker 1996), including Child's (1998) version of trust evolution in brackets

According to Lewicki & Bunker, calculus-based trust is important in the earliest stages of relationship building. During the initial encounters, social actors familiarize themselves with each other in terms of their needs, preferred methods of communication and behavior, as well as life priorities. This phase of CBT can develop into the second stage of trust building, i.e. KBT. In this stage, social actors know each other so well that they seem to be able to 'predict' each other's future actions. Reaching this stage is the result of getting to know each other through frequent interactions. In this sense, Lewicki & Bunker's conceptualization of KBT and its development is congruous with Möllering's concept 'active trust', which he in turn borrowed from Giddens and Nooteboom, as described earlier. If a relationship reaches the state of knowing and understanding each other at a deeper level, the stage of IBT can be reached, which, according to Lewicki & Bunker, is the highest level of trust in a relationship. However, only some relationships reach this stage as some tend to stay at the calculus level and others at the knowledge-based level. Möllering (2006:89f) points out that it is important to note that while social actors develop trust along the three different stages explained above, their 'frame' of judging what signals trust and what does not also changes.

According to Möllering (2006:94), all models of trust development seem to have the following in common:

*[A]ctors do not need to trust each other fully right from the beginning of a relationship, because they can engage experimentally in a kind of as-if trust which may gradually produce genuine trust. While such a process may simply emerge, the more interesting possibility is that actors may actively produce mutual experiences with the aim of testing whether a trust relationship is feasible, but without being able to know in advance the associated benefits and risks.*

In other words, trust building may be initiated by taking risks regarding trusting. Especially in modern societies, where actors know that not everything can be known and that being unfamiliar with individuals, situations, and contexts is the norm rather than the exception, showing active unconditional trust may be one way of gaining familiarity with a certain situation and thus initiating the aligning process. According to Möllering (2006:98), active trust, or ‘as-if’ trust, is one solution for the familiarization with the unknown and, according to Luhmann (1988), trusting expectations are grounded on familiarity. Thus, I argue that trusting as a situated relational interaction combines past experiences with the present situation in order to become familiarized with the unknowable future. While familiarization can on one hand be enhanced by situated experiences with another person, it can also be enhanced by imagining or believing that one shares the same disposition. In both instances, a familiarization takes place which can lead to enhanced trust.

While becoming familiarized with an unknown context and an unknown actor, Möllering (2011, 2013) suggests that several processes (trusting as continuing, processing, learning, becoming, and constituting) co-construct the overall process of trusting, which he conceptualizes to be relational in nature whereby trustors and trustees simultaneously draw from structural, situational, and reflexive elements.

### **2.3.6 Trust in a cultural perspective**

In general, the literature on trust in the context of culture suggests that the concept of culture must be handled in a reflective manner as this is seen to be the main key to fostering trust building across cultures (e.g. Möllering 2006; Mizrachi et al. 2007; Möllering & Stache 2007; Yousfi 2010; Wright & Ehnert 2010). The notion of reflexivity helps to explain the changes in behavior of actors taking part in an intercultural interaction. For example, actors may alter their preferred methods of trust building because they try to adjust to the other actor's perceived cultural background (see especially Mizrachi et al. 2007). Based on this understanding, Möllering and Stache (2007) suggest that trust is accomplished through interaction and communication in which shared meanings are negotiated, an idea that mirrors Zucker's (1986) conceptualization of 'mutual beliefs'. In other words, intercultural trust can be understood as an outcome of successful intercultural interaction in which all parties involved construct a broadly shared understanding of how to deal with each other's' vulnerabilities in the given context, which in turn may constitute a more trusting relationship. Shared meanings arguably lead to similar sense-making processes of the field one interacts in from which trust can emerge.

According to the literature, the main aspect of trust building across cultures is that it is embedded in the process of interactions between social actors, which is in turn influenced by a variety of contextual factors on multiple levels (see e.g. Kühlmann 2005). Thus, trust emerges from a situated relationship as argued by, for instance, Frederiksen (2012, 2014), Möllering (2006) and Schweer (2008a,b). Furthermore, it has been suggested that social actors adjust to the contexts in which they find themselves (Kühlmann 2004:73). Bachmann & Inkpen (2011) point out that whereas social actors may use a certain approach to trust building in their social lives in their home country, they may use a very different approach in an organizational setting. One reason for this change may be found in the differences between these two social systems in terms of how well they support the social process of trusting.

In summary, it has been acknowledged that organizational trust seems to be situated in and influenced by culture (Saunders et al. 2010), and the meaning of trust seems to differ across cultures (Lane & Bachmann 1996; Zaheer & Zaheer 2006). Whereas the majority of scholars believe that culture determines a social actor's behavior (e.g. Hofstede) and thus also his or her behavior of trust development (e.g., Doney et al. 1998), few (e.g. Mizrahi et al. 2007; Perry 2012) argue that social actors choose from a repertoire of trusting behaviors, i.e. that actions should be understood as the outcome of conscious decisions taken by the trustor (ibid.). Situated between the deterministic and the agency-approach in terms of the influence of culture on trust, Möllering (2006) and Saunders et al. (2010) conceptualize trust as profoundly interpersonal and thus, to some extent, as a matter of choice for social actors; however, there is no 'free choice' as indicated by Mizrahi et al. (2007) because, according to Wright & Ehnert (2010:109), trust is "(...) *always shaped by contexts, histories and other actants (both human and non-human)(...)*", while Saunders et al. (2010:9) suggest that "some of the strongest influences are cultural in origin."

These relatively divergent understandings of the influence of culture on trust are to a great extent based on the scholars' different epistemological and ontological perspectives, and thus their different conceptualizations of culture and trust, as well as the chosen methods for investigating trust. In order to provide an overview of trust research taking a cultural perspective, Saunders et al. (2010) edited a book called 'Organizational Trust: A Cultural Perspective', which according to the editors "reports the current state of our knowledge about cross-cultural trust building (...)" (p. xix). Based on their information and other trust research taking a cultural perspective, the following suggestions are made in order to build and sustain trust across borders, all of which seem to mirror 'reflexivity' and aligning in one way or another:

- Encouraging interaction and communication in which shared meanings are negotiated (Möllering & Stache 2007)
- "[T]rust development across cultures should be incorporated in the way actors conceive of as 'good cooperation'." (Yousfi 2010:249)

- Use of ‘a common language’ which fosters ‘in-group development’ (Henderson 2010)
- Encouraging ‘code switching’ (Molinsky 2007) and ‘adjustment’ to the other culture
- Raising ‘cultural sensitivity’ in order to ‘adapt’ (Shapiro et al. 2008)
- Fostering ‘reflexivity in relationship building’ (Möllering & Stache 2010)
- Enhancing the ‘mediating role of the effective line-manager’ (Hope-Haley et al. 2010)

The importance of reflexivity has also been mentioned in Li’s (2013) conceptualization of intercultural trust, which he connects to notions of adaptive learning, thus reiterating Möllering’s process view.

To date, the existing literature on trust-building across borders suggests three different yet overlapping approaches to fostering intercultural trust-development: adaptation and adjustment to the other culture by use of code-switching (Molinsky 2007) and cultural sensitivity (Shapiro et al. 2008); use of ‘a common language’ which fosters ‘in-group development’ (Henderson 2010); and shared meaning-negotiation and reflexivity in relationship-building (Möllering & Stache 2010). The declared aim of the latter two approaches is to construct a new shared culture or ‘bridge-culture’ (see also Li 2013).

Unsurprisingly, trust-based intercultural leadership is based on the same notions as intercultural trust-building, i.e. on the centrality of the creation and communication of shared values and purposes (Gillespie & Mann 2004:596).

## **2.4 Concluding thoughts: Fragments as parts of relational social practices**

The aforementioned concepts have been understood, employed and discussed in a variety of ways. To make sense of the aforementioned fragmentation and ambiguities of the concepts of culture, leadership and trust, I turn to theories of practice because I consider them to be most helpful in entangling the ‘social mess’ of social practices, such as trusting in the context of intercultural leadership.

The interdependence of ‘being influenced by’ while also ‘influencing’ a certain phenomenon lies at the heart of this dissertation. This is crucial not only for the understanding of culture, leadership or trust as laid out in this chapter, but also for social activities and practices in general (see Chapter 3). Thus, theories addressing the relationship between structure and agency may help to better understand the meaning of leadership, how it is practiced, and why and how these practices are entangled with practices of trust in the context of leader-employee interactions taking place across various cultures.

In organization science, scholars have started to turn to practice theory, including Bourdieu (for examples see Miettinen et al. 2009). Quite recently, scholars within the field of leadership studies have also advocated the usefulness of practice theories (see e.g., Crevani et al. 2010) and most recently, research into trust has turned to practice theories (see e.g., Frederiksen 2012; 2014).

However, turning to practice theory as the overarching framework does not imply that I reject the aforementioned theories of culture, leadership and trust. Rather, I aim to discover which situated relational leadership practices can express practices of trusting in a multicultural work context. Furthermore, I aim to analyze whether and in what ways these practices and their sense-making change over time, and what could cause these changes to take place (see research questions (RQs)).

Practice theory may also suggest that trust as a practice, i.e. an isolated practice, does not exist. From the above, it seems justifiable to suggest that trust, or trusting, is always intermeshed with or a 'by-product' of other social practices and processes. Thus, trusting takes place in combination with other practices that happen in a certain context and in relation to a certain Other at a certain point in time, which social actors make sense of in a relational, situated process by drawing on past experiences in their sense-making (conscious and unconscious) of the present situation and their implicit and explicit goals for their future. Regarding my study on trust in the context of multicultural leadership, I therefore suggest that *leadership and trust practices and processes, as well as the processes and practices of cultural identification, are entangled with each other* in such a way that trust can be understood to emerge from a 'messy' social reality (Lau 2004) of interlinked social practices and thus can only be expressed via social practices other than trusting itself. At the very least, my theoretical framework, my empirical data and the literature on leadership and trust strongly suggest that trusting as an isolated practice does not exist. Rather, it is something that is 'conjured up' by social actors in their sense-making processes of other practices, such as when speaking with each other. Thus, I assume that trust is only 'practiced' by social actors in conjunction with other sociocultural behaviors. Nevertheless, trust seems to be something very real: researchers (including myself) attempt to analyze it; interactants discuss it when asked; and many people use it in their daily conversations.

### **3. BOURDIEU'S THEORY OF PRACTICE AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE UNDERSTANDING OF TRUST IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP**

In the previous chapter, I introduced this thesis' research project. This chapter concerns the theoretical framework upon which this thesis is based. First, I introduce Bourdieu's main concepts within his Theory of Practice, which form the overall framework for my dissertation. As my research is concerned with trust building in the context of multicultural leadership, Bourdieu's concepts are applied to the field of study, i.e. leader-employee relations in the field of ethnic sales. Lastly, I critically discuss and justify the overall framework employed in this thesis.

#### **3.1 Bridging structure and agency**

As discussed in Chapter 2, in general, organizational, social, and cultural studies as well as studies on trust broadly speaking aim to research and explain the influence of structure or agency on the phenomenon to be researched. In my dissertation, however, the empirical material and the fragmented theoretical research phenomenon (trust in the context of intercultural leadership) urged me to turn to theories bridging this alleged structure-agency divide, which is why I turned to Bourdieu's Theory of Practice.



In this intercultural study, Bourdieu's theory enables me to view behavior as not merely determined by structure, as structuralist research of cultural studies (e.g. Hofstede 1980; Trompenaars 1993) or studies on trust (e.g., Doney et al. 1998; Johnson & Cullen 2002) would do. Neither does Bourdieu's approach understand behavior to be an outcome of completely free choices, as some of the research on trust from a cultural perspective (e.g. Mizrahi et al. 2007; Perry 2012) seems to indicate. Rather, Bourdieu's Theory of Practice enables me to understand trust building in the context of multicultural leadership as a practice and a process influenced by a complex interplay of agency and structure with neither predominating as both are intertwined. In order to understand this interaction, Bourdieu introduced three main concepts: *Field*, *capital* and *habitus*. Both these and the notion of *practical sense* are presented and discussed in the following chapters as they serve as tools to understand the influence of culture on trust building between leaders and their subordinates in the context of multicultural leadership.

### **3.2 Field, capital, habitus and practical sense: The main concepts of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice**

Building on his empirical studies, Bourdieu conceptualized a theory of practice which provides a framework that bridges the separation of structure and agency, macro and micro, structuralism and constructivism (Bourdieu 1998a: viii). The main concepts helping to bridge these alleged oppositions are field, capital and habitus, all of which work interdependently, which is why the following chapters relate to each other. Since Bourdieu's theory emerged from the empirical material he gathered over his lifetime, several scholars have pointed out that the conceptualization of the theory's basic concepts has been constantly revised and altered. Thus, what is understood by field, capital and habitus is not clear-cut (see e.g. Lau 2004). Despite this, Bourdieu's grand theory of practice can be and has been applied to different research areas including organizational studies (see e.g., Lingard & Christie 2003).

Recently, Bourdieu's theory has also been applied to the field of trust research. In his work on social relational trust, Frederiksen (2012, 2014) employed Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and practical sense in order to provide a more holistic explanation of the interrelationship between structural and agency-related aspects of trust. In this dissertation, which deals with trust in the context of multicultural leadership, I am inspired by Bourdieu's practice theory and draw on its four key concepts as I understand these to be mutually reinforcing, which is why they cannot be understood without referring to each other. However, I will adjust them to my field of research.

### **3.2.1 Struggles, competition and collaboration: Conceptualizing the 'field'**

The social space or world in which social actors interact is composed of a range of different social fields. Fields can be understood as social arenas in which social actors 'play' a field-specific game that can be described as a struggle over certain forms of capital and which Bourdieu, according to Thomsen, called "the logic of the field" (Thomsen 2012:76). Fields, however, do not refer to physical spaces as such, but should rather be conceived of as analytical tools which help to systematize the study of social practice (Wilken 2006:46). In Thomson's (2012:66) view, the three analogies of the field as 'a football field', a 'science-fiction force field', and a 'physical force field' come closest to describing Bourdieu's concept of a field (*le champ* in French), yet without any of them paralleling Bourdieu's understanding of *le champ*. Nevertheless, Bourdieu often referred to social life as a football game or "an ensemble of relatively autonomous spheres of 'play' that cannot be collapsed under an overall societal logic" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:16). Hence, in contrast to, for example, a football field, social fields can overlap or incorporate each other; yet they are often quite independent and can thus be understood as relatively separate social arenas (Bourdieu 1994:3; Bourdieu 1996:xi – xii). Since the social

world comprises a number of fields, social actors move across various fields on a daily basis, which means that they are confronted with different logics and values depending on the field they find themselves in or are moving across.

Within each field a variety of forces exist in the form of “a set of objective power relations that impose themselves on all who enter the field” (Bourdieu 1985:724). Social actors who enter or are part of a field are faced with a variety of positions which are occupied by social agents (persons or institutions) according to their habitus in the form of e.g. their skills, education, or upbringing. Hence, how the game is played and what actions are possible is limited as the field’s structure and power relations impose themselves on the actors as certain rules apply. These rules are part of the field’s “logic of practice” and as such work rather implicitly. Hence, it can be argued that social agents incorporate these ‘rules’ or logics while being immersed in the field and trying to play the game and, thus, embodying the field’s structure and rules. In other words, the field’s structures and logics become a part of a social agent’s habitus, which he or she then draws upon in order to maneuver within the field. Hence, social agents who are partaking in a certain field’s game tacitly follow certain rules and logics, and by doing so create a ‘shared meaning’ of how to behave in a specific field, what should be brought to the field, and what is worth struggling for. Therefore, social agents are able to interact with each other in such a way that they can anticipate the others’ future moves in the field. Hence, what happens in the field is not arbitrary. On the other hand, interactions cannot be predicted since the prevalent rules and the field itself can be challenged and even changed. In fact, even though Bourdieu states that ‘fields’ have their specific rules and are more or less “autonomous microcosms” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:97), their boundaries are not clear-cut, but rather ‘fuzzy’, as Thomson (2012:77) calls it. The reason for this ‘fuzziness’ can be found in Bourdieu’s (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:100) assertion that the struggle to define a certain field’s boundaries is one of the main struggles that social actors are engaged in. Regarding the question as to how one is to determine the borders of a given field, Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:100) provides the following answer:

*We may think of a field as a space within which an effect of field is exercised, so that what happens to any object that traverses this space cannot be explained solely by the intrinsic properties of the object in question. The limits of the field are situated at the point where the effects of the field cease.*

Therefore, fields can be distinguished from each other by their different rules and *logics of practice*, which affect social actors in their interactions and their struggles to accumulate field-specific capital.

Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:17; emphasis in original) explains that any field is

*simultaneously a **space of conflict and competition**, (...) in which participants vie to establish monopoly over the species of capital effective in it – cultural authority in the artistic field, scientific authority in the scientific field, sacerdotal authority in the religious field, and so forth – and the power to decree the hierarchy and “conversion rates” between all forms of authority in the field of power.*

Hence, fields bear resemblance to ‘battlefields’, and even though they are structured in the same way, they have specific logics and thus the aims of the struggles and fights differ across fields. For example, only economic capital may be at stake in economic fields, whereas struggles in other fields may regard respect and influence. Wilken (2011:53) asserts that field analysis is thus about identifying the specific logic underlying a given field’s struggles as these relate to how meaning is produced in a specific field.

In his studies, Bourdieu analyzed, for example, the field of education in “The State Nobility” (1996a), the field of television and journalism (Bourdieu 1998b) and the field of literature (1996b), all of which can have sub-fields and must be examined in relation to the meta-field of power as suggested above. Since Bourdieu does not define what he understands by the ‘field of power’ but rather points to the existence of symbolic power (symbolic capital) and power relations (the dominant and dominated field participants) in any given field, I turn to Grenfell et al.’s (1998:169)

examples of fields of power. For instance, in relation to the field of education, they point to the political and economic systems of society as the field of power since these heavily influence “what is expected of education; how it is organized and to what ends – in other words, what is valued and legitimate.”

In this dissertation, the focus lies on ESAG’s Department of Ethnic Sales and more precisely 6 leader-employee relations embedded in the Department of Ethnic Sales. Inspired by Bourdieu’s (2005:197) notion that “the firm (...) in reality, itself functions as a field”, I conceptualized ESAG as a field. In so doing, the field of *ESAG* can be conceptualized as a sub-field of the ‘*economic field*’, which in turn overlaps, or is at least influenced by, the fields of *politics*, *education*, and *the societal field*, all of which have their specific logics of practice or rules of the game and, therefore, value different sets of capital. On the other hand, the field of ESAG itself can be divided into subfields. Without intending to prematurely proceed to the analysis, it seems fair to expect that the field of *ESAG* can be characterized by at least two diverse logics of practice: the struggle for economic capital and the struggle for cultural capital.

Since this dissertation regards the field of *ESAG*, the notion of culture in the sense of ‘national culture, organizational culture, departmental culture, ethnicity and group belongings’ becomes an essential part of the dissertation. However, in his work, Bourdieu does not as such refer to ‘culture’ as it is understood in this dissertation. In Bourdieu’s world, the cultural field is understood as, for example, the artistic fields or the fields of literature and education. Roughly speaking, culture as understood in this dissertation refers to a ‘group of people’ who more or less share the same ‘meanings’ of certain practices, structures and objects; a more thorough conceptualization of culture is given below. As mentioned earlier, social actors learn to play the social game in certain fields and thereby embody the field’s logic of practice. In other words, the specific logics of practice within certain fields become part of the social agents’ habitus, which frequently reproduces the field’s logic of practice. Following this line of thought, culture as understood in this dissertation is part of an agent’s habitus; inspired by Grenfell’s notion of ‘pedagogic habitus’

(Grenfell et al. 1998:169), I call it *cultural habitus*, which is expressed by for example cultural practices such as speaking a certain language and preferring certain foods.

In summary, while playing the game of social life in certain social fields, social actors consciously or subconsciously compete with each other for position via accruing capitals, and with these, power. By doing so they are influenced by their habitus, the prevalent power structures and the acquired capitals they draw upon. Hence, Thomson (2012:67) argues that Bourdieu's approach to studying the social world "would bring together an inter-dependent and co-constructed trio – the field, capital and habitus – with none of them primary, dominant or causal." Thus, fields include social interactions based on dispositions, practical sense and the perception and sense-making of individuals and the situation itself. They also contain rules and power structures and a common interest, i.e. gaining more specific forms of capital. According to Bourdieu (2005:9), striving to accumulate field-specific capital can be understood as the (re)production of a given field's *illusio*, i.e., "the fundamental belief in the value of the stakes and of the game itself."

In other words, fields contain structures of the social world, which at the same time limit and foster possibilities for social action (Bourdieu 2000:11). Hence, "[t]he field is the locus of relations of force and of struggles aimed at transforming it, and therefore of endless change" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:103).

Even though Bourdieu highlights the actions of struggle and competition in a given field, I argue that due to their logics and structure, fields are also characterized by relations and a common goal, and thus by "organized striving" as Martin (2003:33) calls it:

*Bourdieu goes beyond Fürstenberg in adding that striving in the fields is coordinated neither by 'ideology' nor by conscious strategy but by the habitus, a cultural unconscious, a matrix of dispositions that serves to effectively organize perceptions (Bourdieu 1969 [1966], p. 182). Most importantly, habitus is linked to*

*field position (or at least position in social space, in turn related to field position). This leads to an 'ontological complicity' between the world and our faculties for making sense of it.*

This striving may also be goal-directed, and thus involves not only conflicts but also cooperation and independence alongside interdependence, the latter being an important conceptual criterion for trust.

In order to understand these changes, a specific field's dynamics have to be accounted for, which is why Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:90) points to the importance of history in field analysis:

*(...) we cannot grasp the dynamics of a field if not by a synchronic analysis of its structure and, simultaneously, we cannot grasp this structure without a historical, that is, genetic analysis of its constitution and of the tensions that exist between positions in it, as well as between this field and other fields, and especially the field of power.*

Consequently, field analysis is comprised by synchronic (structuralist) and diachronic (the history of tension and struggle) perspectives. The question of what is at stake, or what is worth fighting for, is one of the core questions in field analysis (Wilken 2011:52). In order to identify the 'struggle' or 'tension', the agents who are part of it must also be identified. And since fields are understood to be dynamic in nature, their specific history in terms of how they have emerged and developed over time must also be analyzed. Moreover, since fields do not emerge in a vacuum, the historical conditions under which the field emerged and developed have to be investigated as well. Thus, field analysis incorporates aspects of habitus-analysis, capital-analysis and the analysis of historical aspects and power issues, both within the specific field but also in relation to other fields, particularly the field of power. Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:108) asserts that:

*There is (...) a sort of hermeneutic circle: in order to construct the field, one must identify the forms of specific capital that operated within it, and to construct the forms of specific capital one must know the specific logic of the field.*

In order to provide a more detailed understanding of positions and struggles in a field and the workings of a field in general, I discuss the concept of capital in the following.

### **3.2.2 Types of capital**

According to Bourdieu (1986:241, cited in Kitchin & Howe 2013:125),” capital is accumulated labor (in its materialized form or its ‘incorporated’ form) which when appropriated on a private ... basis by agents ... enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor.” Following that line of thought, Wilken (2006:46ff) and Thomson (2012:67) point out that capitals are the result of processes as well as enabling ‘processes’ in a given field since social actors draw on their resources (capitals) to compete in the struggle for more power (or capitals) in a given field. It can be argued that those in possession of higher amounts of capital occupy a higher hierarchical level and can thus use their accumulated capital to their advantage in their further struggle for more capital and, hence, for more dominance and power. It should be noted, though, that fields are characterized by those forms of capital social actors desire and, therefore, struggle for. For instance, a person with a master’s degree, but no sales skills, has more capital in the educational field than one with a bachelor degree with a high level of sales skills. Within the field of sales, however, the bachelor student has more capital than the person with the master’s degree.

Bourdieu (1986:82; emphasis in original) outlines three forms of capital:

*Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as **economic capital**, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as **cultural capital**, which is convertible, on certain*



*conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as **social capital**, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility.*

According to Bourdieu (1986), on certain conditions the three types of capital are convertible into other types of capital. For instance, in the field of *ESAG* economic capital can be converted into cultural capital (for example in employing ethnic minority Turks as sales personnel) and vice versa (for instance, *ESAG*'s personnel are paid according to its educational background and skills set). In possessing different types and volumes of capital (a certain *capital portfolio*), social agents distinguish themselves from others which in turn resonates with differences in possible positionings in a given field. A given agents' capital portfolio has been accumulated through practice over time and can be understood as signifiers of for example an agent's status or taste.

As indicated above, *cultural capital* exists in three forms: embodied cultural capital, objectified cultural capital and institutionalized cultural capital. In regard to *embodied cultural capital*, Bourdieu (1986:83) asserts that its accumulation, "inculcation and assimilation" takes time and effort which "must be invested personally by the investor". In its embodied state, this form of cultural capital becomes an "integral part of the person" (ibid.) and thus, its *habitus*. Thus, in line with *habitus* (see next section) embodied cultural capital can be conceptualized as a "system of schemes of perception, appreciation and action" embodied through practices in the course of one's upbringing" (Bourdieu 2000:138). Bourdieu denotes that the acquisition of embodied cultural capital leaves "more or less visible marks ... (such as the pronunciations characteristics of a class or region) [which] help to determine its distinctive value." Hence, in the case of my research it could be expected that certain languages are valued differently depending on the field they are used in and the symbolic value (its scarcity and importance) ascribed to them. In its *objectified* state, cultural capital refers to "material objects and media, such as

writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc.” (Bourdieu 1986:86). *Institutionalized cultural capital* is represented by for example certificates and diplomas which officially recognize agents’ educational standard, i.e. their cultural knowledge.

*Social capital* is defined as: “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu 1986, cited in Kitchin & Howe 2013:127). As such, social capital refers to an agent’s circles of family, friends, groups, memberships and social networks. Social capital can be activated in order to access for example knowledge or other resources from ones network. Furthermore, by accruing a valued title, social capital can be institutionalized.

The three said types of capital can be transformed to *symbolic capital*. Symbolic capital refers thus to the ability to use the abovementioned forms of capital in order to transfer them to some other value such as honor, prestige, recognition or moral issues (for instance by donating money or time). Bourdieu (1989:23; cited in Swartz 2013:102) points out:

*Symbolic capital is a credit; it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition. In this way, the power of constitution, a power to make a new group, through mobilization, or to make it exist by proxy, by speaking on its behalf as an authorized spokesperson, can be obtained only as the outcome of a long process of institutionalization, at the end of which a representative is instituted, who receives from the group the power to make the group.*

The different forms of capital cannot be ordered per se in terms of their importance as the value ascribed to them depends on the social actors that are engaged in a struggle within a certain field. Nevertheless, forms of capital that provide social actors with access to power in the bigger social system (the multitude of fields) can

be said to have a higher status than those that only enhance power or prestige within one field. Besides *forms of capital* Bourdieu also uses the notion of *species of capital* (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:98-100) such as *linguistic capital* as a species of *cultural capital*.

### 3.2.3 Habitus

Bourdieu's notion of habitus embraces the dynamic processes and relations between the individual and the social. According to Wilken (2006:42), these are characterized by three sub-processes or relations:

- a) the dispositions of the individual (Jenkins 1992; Swartz 1997, in Wilken 2006)
- b) embodied experiences (Farnell 2000, in Wilken 2006) and
- c) the individual's anchorage in the social structures

Habitus, then, is “[a] structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure” (Bourdieu 1984:170). In other words, habitus denotes the individual's disposition, pattern of behavior and perception of the social world. Thus, the seemingly external social world is incorporated into the individual's body. Therefore, Bourdieu states that:

*(...) social agents are endowed with habitus, inscribed in their bodies by past experiences. These systems of schemes of perception, appreciation and action enable them to perform acts of practical knowledge, based on the identification and recognition of conditional, conventional stimuli to which they are predisposed to react; and without any explicit definition of ends or rational calculation of means, to generate appropriate and endlessly renewed strategies, but within the limits of the structural constraints of which they are the product and which define them.* (Bourdieu 2000:138).

Thus, habitus influences the agents' (which not only refers to individuals but also other players in a given field, for example companies and institutions) actions and construction of the external social world as well as the external influences on the individual's internal world. Hence, the internal and the external are interdependent. One key notion may be that habitus is in constant yet slow change as it is an outcome of experiences made over time; hence, habitus not only influences experiences and practices but is also itself transformed during this very process. Another important point is that habitus as a set of socialized structures does not predict an individual's actions, but rather should be understood as constraining the range of possible and appropriate actions. Habitus could thus be understood as an individual's dispositions, as his or her "cultural subconscious" in the form of "embodied practices". Wilken (2006:43f) argues that habitus is a result of socialization and therefore a concept of the body rather than of the mind. However, I challenge this notion. As habitus does refer to dispositions, and thus also to cognitive schemata such as cultural frames, it is also a concept of the *mind* and not just of the body. Lau (2004: 374) points to the same notion in his article on Bourdieu's inconsistent conceptualization of habitus. In any case, habitus can be understood as the backdrop to and the frame for social practices, while at the same time being subject to slow change due to repeated actions and the resulting embodiment of new dispositions. Thus, habitus links reality, represented by the field, with individual behavior guided by the practical sense.

### **3.2.4 Practical sense**

According to Bourdieu (2000:139), "the practical sense [is] what enables one to act as one 'should' (...) without positing or executing a Kantian 'should', a rule of conduct." Thus, the individuals' tacit understanding of the situation they find themselves in can be understood as the basis for their actions. This tacit, embodied understanding, however, is itself influenced by two interacting processes: the

process of internalizing the objective structures and the process of externalizing the internalized structures, i.e. acting in a way perceived to be meaningful according to one's cognitive/mental – and thus also cultural - framework, i.e. habitus. This means that the repertoire of perceived meaningful actions is played out within the constraints of generalized pre-understandings or dispositions enacted as practical sense in a field. Hence, actions cannot be predicted as an individual has an ever growing repertoire of possible behaviors to 'choose' from. Moreover, since dispositions are acquired through socialization rather than through cognitive learning – although this is also a possibility (Bourdieu 1984:471, 1990a:75, 107; in Lau 2004:374) - they are understood as embodied, and thus to some extent unconscious or taken-for-granted, understandings of the social world. Nevertheless, social actions based on rationality are not excluded from Bourdieu's framework, but are just one type of behavior alongside the aforementioned embodied practical sense (Bourdieu 1990:68).

### **3.2.5 Explaining reflective agency in a Bourdieusian framework**

In line with Emirbayer & Mische (1998:973) I argue that social actors are influenced by their habitus, yet that these incorporated structures are flexible – a notion also found in Bourdieu's relational theory. This flexibility is arguably an outcome of agency, which Emirbayer & Mische (1998:971) conceptualize as being not only automatized but also reflective and essentially relational in nature:

*(...) it [agency] incorporates Mead's insight that it is the capacity for imaginative distancing, as well as for communicative evaluation, in relation to habitual patterns of social engagement that drives the development of the reflective intelligence, that is, the capacity of actors to critically shape their own responsiveness to problematic situations.*

By drawing on habitus, structure, practical sense and reflexivity, Emirbayer & Mische provide an understanding of social practice that could be said to correspond with Bourdieu's framework. However, this does not bring habitus or social and cultural structures to the foreground as the main influence on practice, but rather treats these as but one influence alongside the impact of (reflexive) agency. Moreover, their conceptualization of agency is more complex and includes agency in the sense of the tacit replication of structure.

According to Emirbayer & Mische (1998:971; original emphasis), agency can be divided into three interrelated elements, namely:

1. The iterational element, which they define as "the selective reactivation by actors of past patterns of thought and action, as routinely incorporated in practical activity, thereby giving stability and order to social universes and helping to sustain identities, interactions, and institutions over time."
2. The projective element, which according to Emirbayer & Mische "encompasses the imaginative generation by actors of possible future trajectories of action, in which received structures of thought and action may be creatively reconfigured in relation to actors' hopes, fears, and desires for the future."
3. And lastly, the practical-evaluative element, which "entails the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action, in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations."

These elements can also be understood as comprising different interacting phases of the trusting process. The first element refers to the past (Emirbayer & Mische 1998:975), as it refers to the "habitual dimension of action", and thus to Bourdieu's notion of habitus and disposition. The second element clearly refers to the future and as such to the ability of social actors to imagine a future different to that which they experienced in the past. Emirbayer & Mische (ibid.:984, emphasis in original) talk of "the *hypothesization* of experience, as actors attempt to reconfigure received schemas by generating alternative possible responses to the problematic situations

they confront in their lives.” The way in which social actors generate alternatives is understood to depend on culture as “the specific culturally embedded ways in which people imagine, talk about, negotiate, and make commitments to their futures influence their degree of freedom and maneuverability in relation to existing structures (i.e. it *matters* to what degree they understand time as something fixed and determinate, or conversely, as something open and negotiable)” (Emirbayer & Mische 1998:985). The notion of maneuverability refers to the present, and thus to the third element of agency, the element of practical evaluation. In order for social actors to make practical evaluations, they have to make judgments about the situation in the face of (un)familiarity, a process that Emirbayer & Mische (1998:994) call “contextualization”. This element seems to refer to Bourdieu’s notion of practical sense, which derives from the interplay of habitus and situated interactions. However, it apparently entails a much stronger focus on reflexivity than can be found in Bourdieu’s notion of practical sense; yet, as mentioned earlier, Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992) conceptualize practical sense as also holding the power of change and creativity. As argued by Emirbayer & Mische (1998:994), certain patterns or structures are challenged by social actors by engaging with others or themselves in a process of deliberation regarding the existent constraints, a notion which Archer termed “internal conversation” (Archer 2003). Emirbayer & Mische (1998:994) consider conversation as the most important process in differentiating whether social agents tend to engage in “tacit maneuvers” (reproducing social and cultural structures through automated actions) or “deliberative decision making”, which may challenge existing structures.

Hence, in the context of this study, when returning agency to situated interactions, trust building can also be explained as being based on agency and reflexivity. Thus, ‘choosing’ to trust and initiating active trust as a first step in the aligning process may also originate from conscious choices (see e.g. Mizrahi et al. 2007; Perry 2012) which, however, are influenced by one’s habitus, the unfolding relationship, and the context/situation. Hence, the relational process of trusting cannot be separated from trust as disposition. The existing literature on relational trust,

however, seldom conceptualizes trust as influenced by both *habitus*, i.e. perceived familiarity and justifications, and practical sense, i.e. relationship processes. Rather, as argued by Frederiksen (2014), trust is researched as the individual experience of alignment (Hardin 2002; Misztal 2011; Sztompka 1999, referred to in Frederiksen 2014) when speaking of “taking others’ interests into account” (Hardin 2002), “accepting vulnerability” (Misztal 2011) or “accepting risk” (Sztompka 1999). From a Bourdieusian perspective, these are individual experiences established in interactions and thus have a relational nature.

As mentioned by Frederiksen (2014), to date only a few works exist that treat trust as a situated relational process, meaning that they point to ideas that, from a Bourdieusian perspective, could be understood along the lines of ‘aligning practical sense’ or, as Frederiksen (2014:185) puts it, “confidently relying on the generative capacity of the relationship.” In other words, social actors may trust the other based on “faith” (Simmel 1950; Möllering 2006).

### **3.2.6 Summary: The interconnectedness of field, capital, habitus and practical sense**

In summary, Bourdieu’s notion of ‘field’ refers to relationships between social actors endowed with diverse capital portfolios who struggle for particular forms of capital valued in a given field. Wilken (2006:48) asserts that social actors are engaged in a variety of struggles for capital in a variety of fields at the same time; “as family member, friend, citizen, customer, CEO, employee, and so forth.” In other words, the social actors’ identity and their identification with a certain role, social identity or cultural identity seem to shift across fields as for example ‘playing the game of a family member’ is probably not in line with the logics of the economic field. To be in line with a field’s logic of practice thus requires a given agent to align his or her habitus to the given field’s logic. Bourdieu (2006:60, in Grenfell 2012:107) asserts that only a habitus adapted to a certain field is able to anticipate



the potentialities, i.e., a probable future, this field contains. Hence, when habitus and the logics of the field align, a probable future can be anticipated and reasonable practices can be initiated. In the relation to this study on trusting it could be argued that the anticipation of a probable future might reduce uncertainty and thus, may foster trusting.

### **3.3 Applying Bourdieu's Theory of Practice to the practice of trusting in the context of multicultural leadership**

In the previous chapters and sections, I outlined the overall theoretical framework on which this dissertation rests. In the following, I will review the relevant literature pertaining to my research on trust building in multicultural leadership in light of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice in order to position my research within the existing body of literature and to highlight existing gaps, some of which this research will address.

#### **3.3.1 Conceptualizing culture through the lens of Bourdieu's Practice Theory**

Since this dissertation concerns the field of *ethnic sales*, the notion of culture in the sense of 'national culture, organizational culture, departmental culture, ethnicity and group belongings' becomes an essential part of the dissertation. Yet, in his work, Bourdieu does not refer to 'culture' but instead to cultural fields and cultural capital. Moreover, the existing notions of culture cannot be understood as a coherent working definition of culture. For example, Bourdieu (1990:29) states that

*[c]ulture is that sort of freely available and all-purpose knowledge that you acquire in general at an age when you don't yet have any questions to ask. You can spend*

*your life increasing it, cultivating it for its own sake. Or else, you can use it as a sort of more or less inexhaustible toolbox.*

In this quote, he seems to refer to culture as being a part of a societal field, or the social world in general, the structures of which are incorporated by individuals and are thus represented in their habitus. The acquisition of ‘culture’ is furthermore depicted as a process leading to an unlimited ‘toolbox’ of cultural practices and understandings. This notion resembles Swidler’s (1986) conceptualization of “culture as a toolbox” or repertoire of “strategies of actions” (Swidler 1986:273).

In regard to how social agents ‘use’ this ‘toolbox’, i.e. the relationship between ‘culture’ as incorporated structures and behavior, Bourdieu’s statements seem to be somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, he points out that

*the encounter between two disciplines [referring to the dialogue between economists and sociologists] is the encounter between two histories, and thus between two cultures: each one deciphers what the other says in accordance with his or her own code, his or her own culture (Bourdieu 1990:87).*

Here Bourdieu seems to indicate that cultures have their own distinctive codes which do more than simply influence social actors’ behavior. On the other hand, Bourdieu (2013: 218, n.1) refuses to understand culture or any ‘historical system’ as coherent wholes. He asserts:

*In reality these systems remain, like culture as described by Lowie, “things of shreds and patches”, even if these patches are constantly undergoing unconscious and intentional restructurings and reworking tending to integrate them into the system.*

How then can culture be conceptualized in a Bourdieusian perspective?

As outlined earlier, Bourdieu understands social actors to act according to a ‘sense’ or ‘practical logic’ which emerges in relation to the objective living conditions in which the actors find themselves. However, this ‘sense’ is *not determined* by these

conditions, such as through a given system or structure of, for example, an organization or a 'culture'. Rather, individuals are *influenced* by these structures and meaning systems while they 'use' them in order to accrue more power. By doing so, they reproduce existing meanings and structures but may also produce new meanings and, thus, challenge the very meaning system and structure. Hence, when applying a Bourdieusian perspective, any meaning system is rendered unstable and changeable due to the social actors' use and interpretation of it. Following this line of thought, I argue that 'culture' thus cannot be understood as a stable system either; it has to be conceptualized as unstable and in flux since it is changeable due to the actors' behaviors within the very system. *Culture thus becomes a social construction.*

In addition, any system or structure is used in a 'meaningful' way: social actors enact practices which are 'meaningful or reasonable' to them despite the fact that they may not know what they are undertaking and why. Thus, actors draw on their habitus and their tacit 'knowledge' of a given meaning system when producing meaningful actions in the context of certain living conditions, situations, fields and relationships. As mentioned earlier, social actors move across various fields, situations, and relationships throughout their day. Therefore, they find themselves in a variety of sub-fields belonging to the overall societal field or socio-cultural areas. Hence, social actors draw on certain parts of a system, i.e. the sub-systems or sub-structures, as only these are experienced as the relevant meaning system in a certain situation at a certain point in time. For example, as a PhD student at AAU, I make sense of and 'use' the educational system in order to accrue educational capital, i.e. cultural capital, in order to later transfer it into economic and symbolic capital. On the other hand, on a daily basis I am more influenced by the organizational sub-cultures at AAU, i.e. the overall meaning system of problem based learning, and the meaning systems of being a part of a certain institute, department and research group, all of which are parts of the overall socio-cultural field. *Hence, if one is to follow Bourdieu's conceptual framework, culture as a meaning system should rather be understood as being fragmented and embedded in the social.* In addition, the

above example shows that *cultural meaning systems can be transferred and acquired by social actors* while they are immersed in them, i.e. while interacting with the system itself and other social agents of the system.

In summary, following Bourdieu's conceptual framework implies that there seems to be no coherent or stable coding system underlying a given culture. This line of theorizing moreover suggests that behaviors cannot be explained by tracing them back to a consistent cultural habitus. In fact, as mentioned earlier, social actions are explained by the intertwined interplay of an agent's habitus and the structures of a social field, including the relations between social agents that are part of that given field. Since, to my knowledge, Bourdieu did not conceptualize culture explicitly, I finally turned to Omar Lizardo (2011), who intensively discussed Bourdieu's implicit understanding of culture by referring to other scholars struggling with Bourdieu's concept of culture (e.g. Grenfell 2004; Swartz 1997; Swidler 1995, in Lizardo 2011).

Referring to Bloch (1986), Lizardo (2011:29) points out that Bourdieu's notion of culture is best portrayed in Bourdieu's study of the Berber house, which Bourdieu himself called "the Kabyle House" (Bourdieu 1990: 271-83). Throughout Bourdieu's description of a particular Kabyle house, the reader is not only presented with the exact shapes and sizes of the walls and doors but also with the Kabyle expressions for these, which in turn are explained to be metaphors for the entire surrounding world and which are related to certain cultural practices that present themselves in overall cultural patterns. To say it with Bloch (1986:31, cited in Lizardo 2011:29):

*The key point to keep in mind is that for Bourdieu "a child brought up in a Berber house by Berber parents picks up Berber notions, just because the material nature of the house, as well as the behavior of the people with whom he interacts [itself constrained by the material nature of the house] contains in itself the specific history of the Berbers". Therefore, "the [material] environment is not neutral but is itself culturally constructed".*

Hence, an individual's sense of culture is generated through practices while being immersed in a certain social setting, including its material environment, over a longer period of time. In other words, culture is socially constructed, context dependent, changeable, and in flux. On the other hand, individuals are altered by a given environment over time. Just as habitus and the field stand in a dialectic relationship, so do the individual and the concept of culture as an embodied knowledge and meaning system; both are intertwined and cannot be considered independently.

Based on these ideas, I conceptualize culture in the light of practice theory as *relational, highly contextual, socially constructed embodied knowledge and "practice mastery"* (Ingold 2000:162, cited in Lizardo 2011:32) which is *fragmented and in constant change*.

Yet, despite conceptualizing culture as *in flux, instable, fragmented, socially constructed and relational*, generalizations of, for example, national culture do exist. How can these be explained from a Bourdieusian perspective?

Two keywords running through Bourdieu's entire work seem to answer this question: *relational* and *practice*. Based on the presentation of Bourdieu's key concepts outlined in the previous chapter, I propose that social agents become acquainted with and incorporate socio-cultural practices while experiencing a given environment, its practices, social agents, power structures and materialism throughout an extended period of time. Hence, if a given social actor takes part in an environment with predominant practices that are characterized by generalizations and stereotypes, it is likely that these become incorporated into the agent's habitus, i.e. his or her disposition and preference regarding "understanding, knowing how, and desiring" (Reckwitz 2002:250), all of which impact on the aforementioned notion of "practice mastery". If the same social agent, however, enters a field in which he or she is to 'play the field's game' alongside or together with stereotyped others, then practices may have to be mastered in a different way because the environment has changed. According to practice theory, it can be expected that a

social agent's habitus is altered if the social agent is to spend a prolonged period of time in this different environment. Thus, stereotypical understandings may become less pronounced. Nevertheless, even though the impact of environments may be considered important for the alteration of habitus, I consider the impact of fields to be even more influential. As mentioned earlier, fields contain power structures and thus they also inhabit social agents who – for the time being - hold the power to decide what the game of the field is about, i.e. which capital is strived for and how it should be contested. Moreover, it is these powerful agents who fight for the prevention of the field's boundaries, and thus set up rules and regulations as to which and how agents are 'allowed' to enter the given field. In other words, a given field has key actors who, without being aware of it, more or less decide the (tacit) rules of conduct and the implicit 'natural order' in a given field, i.e. its *doxa*, which Bourdieu also calls "hidden persuasion" or, simply put, the "*order of things*" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:167; emphasis in original). Regarding the 'internalization' of this order, Bourdieu (ibid.) explains that: "being born in a social world, we accept a whole range of postulates, axioms, which go without saying and require no inculcating." *Doxa* can be said to be closely related to *symbolic power* and *symbolic violence*, which Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:167; emphasis in original) defines as "the *violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity*." He further explains this statement by referring to the dialectic relationship and the 'fit' between habitus and the societal field:

*To say it more rigorously: social agents are knowing agents who, even when they are subjected to determinisms, contribute to producing the efficacy of that which determines them insofar as they structure what determines them. And it is almost always in the 'fit' between determinants and the categories of perception that constitutes them as such that the effect of domination arises.*

Hence, it can be argued that certain fields exist in which cultural stereotyping is the 'norm' as it is perceived to be a natural part of the game, instilled by those social agents who hold the symbolic power to set up the rules of the game. Moreover, the use of socio-cultural stereotypes may refer to a 'natural order' or 'hierarchy' of

‘cultural groups’, thus implicitly or explicitly differentiating between dominant and dominated ‘cultural groups’.

To sum up, I conceptualize culture as *relational, highly contextual, socially constructed embodied knowledge and “practice mastery”* (Ingold 2000:162, as cited in Lizardo 2011:32) *which is fragmented and in constant change*. As argued earlier, this understanding does not mean that social actors cannot conceptualize culture in terms of generalizing stereotypes, as will become apparent in the analysis part, which deals with leader-employee interactions in the field of ESAG. Without providing an analysis at this point, I briefly discuss in the following how such a field could be conceptualized in light of Bourdieu’s practice theory.

### **3.3.2 Using Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice in organizational research: The field of ESAG**

As mentioned earlier, I conceptualized ESAG as a field seeing that they organizations have structures which, according to Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:114), can be “understood as a space of objective relations between positions defined by their rank in the distribution of competing powers or species of capital.” Within this field, certain rules apply which in turn determine the accredited form or portfolio of capital employees must have in order to enter the field and, thus, organizational members strive to accumulate. In the field of ESAG, this would most probably be economic capital (increasing sales or increased salary), social capital (establishing long lasting well-functioning company-customer relationships and employer-employee relationships) and thus symbolic capital (being the best known and preferred company within the specific field of sales or being an important asset to the company). As outlined above, fields can be characterized by struggles or ‘organized striving’. In the case of the field of ESAG, it can be assumed that organizational members struggle to either obtain or maintain a certain position, and to improve their professional situation (e.g., increased wages and career

advancement). In line with field theory, the field of ESAG offers diverse positions which are taken according to the agents' capital portfolio. Thus, their '*work habitus*' must 'fit' the field's demands in terms of the specific capital portfolio. Which portfolio is acknowledged is determined by the dominant actors, i.e. by those higher up in the hierarchy (the CEO and top management) or those in the 'field of power' (e.g., regulatory agencies, tax authorities, juridical system of a given nation).

Conceptualizing ESAG or any organization as a field has implication for the conceptualization of leadership. In section 2.2, I presented an overview on scholarly approaches to leadership. Employing Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and capital suggests yet another conceptualization of leadership. According to Lingard and Christie (2003:319f), the use of Bourdieu's concepts

*enable us to move beyond trait, situational and transformational leadership theories, emphasizing instead the recursive relationship between agency (individual leader habitus) and structure (field) in the broader social context. Habitus enables us to talk about the person of the leader not simply in terms of traits, character and personal influence, but also in relation to specific social structures and embodied dispositions. Field enables us to talk about the context of leadership, in this case the [organization], as 'structured social space' with its own properties and power relations, overlapping and interrelating with (...) other fields.*

Following Lingard and Christie's statement, leadership, when conceptualized through Bourdieu's practice theory, renders leaders and their employees as social agents who stand in relation to each other, influence each other, and struggle for the field-specific form(s) of capital. In order to do so, they must themselves possess an *organizational specific habitus* (Kitchin & Howe 2013:129) which portrays "field-relevant dispositions to the rules and regularities of the [organizational] field" (ibid.). In regard to this study, ESAG's leaders and employees of diverse cultural backgrounds (*cultural habitus*) are therefore understood to be endowed with diverse sets of dispositions seeing that they were embodied in diverse societal fields. In addition, leadership at ESAG can be understood as being influenced by other fields



which overlap or influence the field of ESAG in two ways: First, the leaders' and employees' habitus has been shaped by their upbringing in a certain wider socio-cultural environment, i.e., certain societal structures have been embodied in the organizational members' habitus which influences their understanding of the field of ESAG and their positions within the field. Second, the field of *ESAG* is influenced by other fields and thus, leadership at ESAG is affected by these other field's logics of practice.

### **3.3.3 Trust building in a Bourdieusian perspective**

Applying the aforementioned framework of habitus, field and capital to the existing literature on interpersonal trust highlights the interconnectedness of theories on trust pertaining to the social sphere, such as work on generalized trust (e.g. Uslaner 2002; Delhey & Newton 2005) and systems trust (Luhmann 1980), with work on interpersonal trust focusing on individuals and the role of emotions (e.g. Barbalet 1996; Lewis & Weigert 1985) and reflexivity (e.g., Giddens, 1986, 1990; Möllering 2001, 2006). At the same time, a Bourdieusian approach to interpersonal trust challenges those theories on interpersonal trust constituting trust as a phenomenon belonging to solely either the individual or the structure. As outlined in the chapter above, taking a relational approach to social practices means that trusting emerges from a dialogue between the intertwined phenomena of subjectivity, situations and social structure. In other words, social actions, such as trusting, develop from the complex interactions of habitus, fields and capitals. As has been mentioned, field and habitus co-develop with the field imposing forces on the social agent while, at the same time, social agents can change the field by re-distributing the diverse forms of capital, which consequently results in changes in the power structures within a given field. Due to the understanding that field, habitus, and capital are mutually influencing, it can be argued that when an individual's habitus is well-aligned with the social field in which it has developed, the social agent behaves intuitively and

with ease and represents a behavior which seems to be based on an individual's practical sense. In contrast, when habitus and field are not in alignment, the individual has to maneuver within a representation of social structures, rules and power relations with which he or she is not familiar. Hence, actions of aligning are required in order to reach a certain level of alignment, which is then likely to facilitate smooth collaborations. Regarding trust, the notions of perceived 'familiarity' and 'aligning' seem to be important in understanding trust building in contexts and relationships characterized by perceived or experienced unfamiliarity, either of the situation, the relationship, or the wider social/cultural structure.

Using the key concepts of Bourdieu and the notion of (un)familiarity and alignment as the main contextual and process factors, Frederiksen (2014) presents the following model for the trusting process (see figure 3).

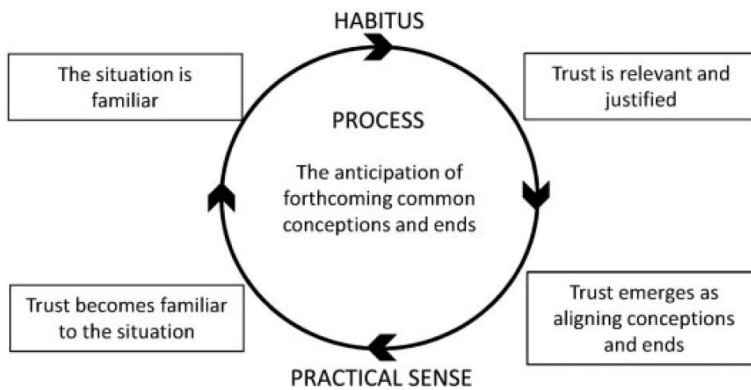


Figure 3: Analytical phases of the trusting process. (Frederiksen 2014:181)

This model visualizes how Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and practical sense mutually reinforce each other, thus showcasing how trust as disposition (habitus) and trust as relationship (practical sense) are self-enforcing. In order to render an unfamiliar situation more familiar, adjusting and improvising actions and perceptions in a given relationship are vital for the alignment of the conceptions of

the situation, the purposes and the meaningful actions across the social actors taking part in a given relationship. As pointed out by Frederiksen (2014:182f), “trust is both created in the encounter of agents and drawn from social structure and institutions, but these are not separate phenomena, but rather the same phenomenon seen with different temporal methodologies. Only in re-integrating these perspectives does trust as an on-going practice and process emerge.” This view on trust has implications for how trust as a practice and a process can be studied, which I shall account for in the methodology chapter. Furthermore, if trust is understood as an outcome of aligning practical senses that are co-shaped and re-shaped by habitus and experiences, I argue, in line with Seligman (2011:206), that the emergence of trust between social actors who perceive each other to be different can only occur through shared embodied experiences.

*As we attempt the construction of a shared social world, we should learn from and hence be open to experience – rather than preconceived ideas and abstract forms of knowledge. We should enter this process only through a slow, cumulative and not always conscious process of straddling the boundaries of our existing and developing modes of thought through the challenges of shared action – of embodied experience.*

According to Frederiksen, and in light of the presentation of Bourdieu’s key concepts as outlined above, interpersonal trusting can be explained by the interplay of habitus and practical sense, which is presented in more detail in the sections to follow.

### ***Trust as disposition:***

As mentioned earlier, Bourdieu’s notion of habitus can be understood as a reservoir of cognitive schemata and socialized structures which have been internalized and embodied during a lifetime of experiences. Hence, habitus refers to the past. On the other hand, it is through the lens of habitus that individuals make sense of the present situation at hand. In other words, the cognitive schemata in form of internalized cultural and social frames or preferences guide the individual’s

interpretation and classification processes. Hence, it is predominantly via the aspects of habitus that an individual understands a situation or social action to be familiar, normal, risky or dangerous. Habitus then guides the justifications for trust, which in turn are based on perceptions of familiarity. In addition, habitus plays an important role in judging whether trust is appropriate in the first place.

According to Frederiksen, “[d]isposition concerns how the development of the individual way of thinking, acting and perceiving reflects the development and constitution of society in general regarding culture, economy and social relations. Psychogenesis and sociogenesis intertwine but are neither identical nor in a simple causal relation” (Frederiksen 2012:63). Following this line of thought, it can be argued that individuals’ belonging to a specific group, organization or nationality with its various types of cultural and social structures influences the individuals’ habitus, i.e. their repertoire of dispositions and internalized embodied structures, and thus their perception of interpersonal relations, such as leader-employee relationships. A similar account was found by Geertz (1973), who spoke of a ‘web of significances’ in his definition of culture which, arguably, broadly represents sociogenesis and the individual’s being in and sense-making of it. This being said, I would like to stress that cultural frames, embodied social structures and habitus as such do *not predict* an individual’s actions, but rather guide it as it is through these that a situation and relationship is made sense of.

In general, the literature on interpersonal trust is dominated by scholarly work on propensities to trust and justifications for trust, which in turn are based on perceived familiarity. Literature pertaining to trust as a rational choice (see section 2.3.1) claims that trust is based on reason, i.e. rational calculations based on objective evidence. However, when taking a Bourdieusian perspective, the notion of categorizing evidence as speaking against or in favor of trust can be challenged. The question is not so much about what comprises the signals of trustworthiness, but rather regarding the nature of these signals and how they are made sense of. In contrast to the literature taking a rational choice approach or referring to the notion of ‘encapsulated interest’ (Hardin 2002), the relational approach claims that

individuals are always influenced by their social surroundings or rather that the social is a part of them at all times, e.g. as their habitus. Thus, the social world is not understood to be separate from that of the individual. Consequently, an objective observation and interpretation of signals of trustworthiness – whether explicit or tacit - is not possible, as any observation and subsequent interpretation are guided by habitus and can thus be understood as ‘dispositional interpretation’ (Frederiksen 2012:65). Hence, any interpretation is a result of a dialog between experiences made in the past, deposited in the individual’s habitus, and experiences made in the present, i.e. in the immediate situated relational encounter. As mentioned earlier, it is through the interplay of habitus and the practical sense that a social actor experiences familiarity. In other words, familiarity is not simply understood to be a conscious phenomenon but rather to be an ‘embodied familiarity’ (Frederiksen 2012:66) based on embodied experiences made in the past. As a result, any observation is a “partial perspective filled by emotions, sensuality, and preconceptions, along with a profound familiarity of use” (Frederiksen 2012:65). As such, Frederiksen (2012:66) claims that “familiarity refers to the interpretation of that which can be known about a situation.” Therefore, how far social actors can be said to build trust based on ‘good reasons’ can be questioned as all reasons are a result of subjective interpretation. Hence, in the light of a Bourdieusian approach to trust, trust understood along the lines of a rational choice approach does not make much sense and –if at all – is merely one explanation for why trust building occurs.

As mentioned in section 2.3.2, trust has also been conceptualized as ‘modus operandi’ or ‘taken for granted’. Frederiksen (2012:62) refers to this kind of trust as “intersubjective trust as structural stability”. Following Bourdieu’s framework, however, I claim that “intersubjective trust as structural stability” (ibid.) should rather be understood as ‘trust due to the alignment of habitus/disposition of trust and the actual situation’. In other words, since the situation is implicitly perceived as being familiar to the social agent, behavior is enacted without much thought. Perhaps one could say that the actor has a ‘feel for’ the situation and/or the other actors in the field, and thus actions guided by practical sense are played out

effortlessly. Nevertheless, it can be argued that organizational structures can be perceived as providing stability, which in turn enables members of this organization to have confidence in the structure and its corresponding role expectations. It is then only in situations when roles are unclear – or as Seligman argues, when agency takes over - that risk can enter the interaction and trust thus becomes important (Seligman 1997). This statement, however, can be challenged in two ways when employing a relational approach. First, following the above argument of familiarity being a decisive factor for trusting, it could be assumed that deviations from role expectancies present unfamiliar situations which are made sense of and acted upon by use of one's practical sense, which draws on habitus to give meaning to the role deviations and guide one's further conduct. Second, as argued by Frederiksen (2012:62), Seligman seems to assume that the social order, such as an organization's structure, is a social 'given', self-acting entity with a structure that is stable and thus imposes itself on the social actor. Seen from Bourdieu's framework, the individual is part of the social structure and vice versa. Hence, social structures can be influenced and slowly changed by social actors since they interact with and are part of an individual's agency. Consequently, the social and the individual are not two separate entities with different logics, but are a, on the one hand unstable but on the other hand mutually adapting, continual process of becoming and being. In other words, an individual's sense making processes of deviant role behaviors, for example, is not a process that takes place through an observer detached from the very structure he or she is observing, but from an individual who is entangled within the structure or his or her 'web of significances', to use Geertz' definition of culture. Hence, it can be questioned as to how far we can speak of 'agency' in the sense of actions taken in a conscious manner, built on objective evidence, and being precisely aimed towards a well-defined goal. In Bourdieu's framework, I argue that one would rather speak of an 'implicit situated composition of perception and understanding aiming at implicitly rather than explicitly aligning interaction and meaning'; thus, any 'agency' is based on tacit and embodied experiences of the past surfacing in the present and directed at the future. Following this line of thought, I argue that trust as

a *modus operandi* is based on a perceived familiarity of the situation, the actors and/or their roles in a given context.

***Trust as relationship:***

From a Bourdieusian perspective, trust is an outcome of the reinforcing influences of structure and agency (see figure 3). While trust as dispositions points to the influence of structure on trusting, trust as relationship highlights the effect of agency on trusting. Within the body of literature on trust as ‘relationship’ agency is often connected to reflexivity which even is argued as enabling social actors to ‘choose’ to engage in active trust building. From a Bourdieusian perspective, however, it is questionable as to how far a social actor ‘chooses’ to engage in active trust building as suggested by Möllering. Rather, it seems more appropriate to speak of embodied unconscious actions based on practical sense when a social actor engages in ‘active trust building practices’. Nevertheless, the Bourdieusian perspective does not reject the idea of social actors reflexively engaging with each other; it is, however, deemed to play a ‘subordinate’ role (Bourdieu 1990:91):

*Reflexive attention to action itself, when it occurs (almost invariably only when the automatisms have broken down), remains subordinate to the pursuit of the result and to the search (not necessarily perceived in this way) for maximum effectiveness of the effort expended.*

As it seems, reflexivity may exist in a Bourdieusian framework, though almost solely in situations where social actors are challenged by unfamiliarity and uncertainties, which is how I interpret the notion of ‘automatism-break-down’ mentioned by Bourdieu. In other words, my understanding of Bourdieu’s Logic of Practice provides room for agency as I understand social actors to be not merely ‘internalizing’ and ‘reproducing’ social structure. It is precisely in challenging and unfamiliar contexts or fields – as one might interpret Bourdieu – where automatism breaks down that reflexivity moves into the foreground and – as I understand it – plays a role in the process of aligning practical sense from which trust may emerge.

### 3.3.4 Summary

Frederiksen (2014) provided some insights into trust as a situated relational process. In the current literature, interpersonal trust is often conceptualized as being based on justifications for trust. These justifications are constructed against a backdrop of familiarity. This is what Frederiksen called “Trust as Disposition”. Somewhat contrary to this view of conceptualizing trust, a body of trust literature exists which stresses the importance of context and the very interactions taking place in a relationship. This literature points to the significance of understanding trust as a subjective process which is based on signaling and interpreting cues of trustworthiness in a given situation and in a certain context. However, what is understood to be a familiar context, situation or person influences the behavior and sense-making of a person (tacit and explicit justifications for trust) while being in a certain relationship in a given situation and context. Hence, what Frederiksen calls “Trust as Disposition” influences what he names “Trust as Relationship”. Following a Bourdieusian perspective suggests that experiences made in regard to trust in a given relationship become embodied in a person’s habitus, i.e. their dispositions. Hence, Frederiksen (2014:181) argues that these two understandings of trust influence each other in an endless circle and that it is this very circle which explains trust as a process.

Hence, the relational process of trusting cannot be separated from trust as disposition. The existing literature on relational trust, however, seldom conceptualizes trust as influenced by both habitus, i.e. perceived familiarity and justifications, and practical sense, i.e. relationship processes. In his paper on relational trust, Frederiksen conceptualizes trust as “an anticipation of the forthcoming which continues the trust relationship of the present into a set of potential, familiar future situations of justified trust” (Frederiksen 2014:182). Trusting as situated relational practice thus emerges from the interplay of agency as



the interrelated elements of iteration, projectivity, practical evaluation, habitus, and practical sense, all of which social actors draw from in different quantities in certain fields or contexts with their constraining and enabling power structures.

This process can be visualized as follows:

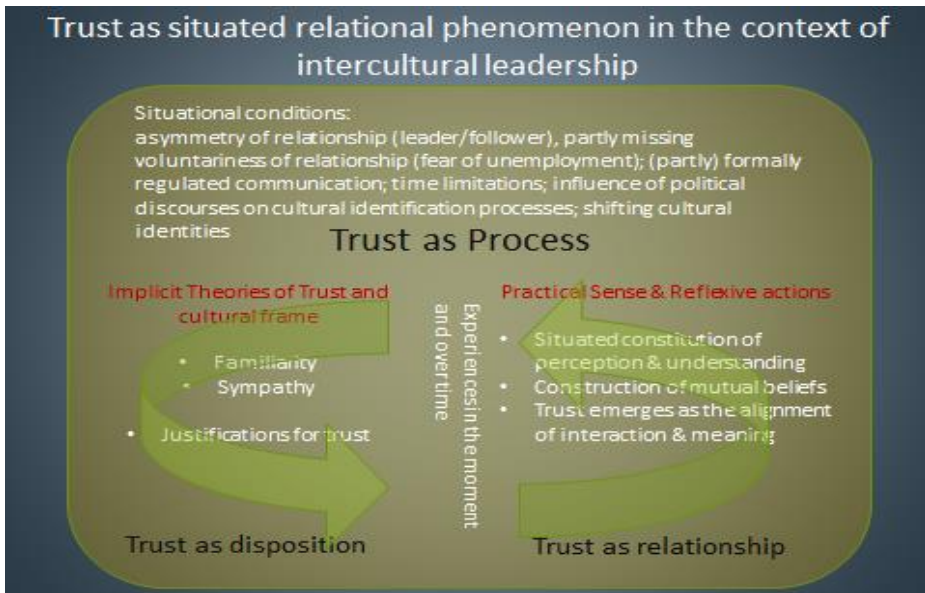


Figure 3: Trust as situated relational phenomenon in the context of intercultural leadership (adapted from Schweer's (2008a) "Differential theory of trust shown in a dyadic relation"

The processes of trust take place in certain fields or, as I will show, across certain fields, all of which have their distinctive yet changeable and at times contested *illusio*. The *illusio* refers not only to a taken-for-granted power structure in a certain field, but also to its logics of practice. Since social fields hold positions which are often taken by social actors fitting the field in terms of their habitus and capital portfolio, trust processes which involve social actors from diverse fields may arguably be more challenging since the agents' habitus may differ to some extent.

This has relevance in the aforementioned notions of familiarity and justifications for trust, which influence the situated perception of and the actual behavior in a given relationship taking place in a specific context.

Hence, understanding the field(s) in which or across which relations interact is important for the understanding of *when*, *why* and *how* trusting is understood to be a reasonable practice in a given leader-employee relation at a given point in time and in a certain contextual setting.

In the analysis, the notion of justifications for trust, and the familiarity with the other, the situation or the practice one engages in, as well as the notion of subjective perception and practical sense and reflexivity, will be related to and discussed using Bourdieu's toolbox of 'field, capital, and habitus'. This also allows sense to be made of the aforementioned 'situational conditions' influencing trust in situated relational leader-employee interactions at ESAG.

In summary, trust is understood as an individual, interactional and relational phenomenon. It can be explained as an interplay between personal experience, the unfolding situation and one's socio-cultural interpretation schemes. It is a dynamic and mutually informing process between social agents and the (power) structures of the field in which they compete. Thus, trusting in a Bourdieusian perspective combines individual change with the changes of the field's structures. Furthermore, trusting as a reasonable practice or experience seems to be always connected to other practices, such as those of leadership or culture, which in turn take place in certain conditions, are interpreted and experienced, and may change over time. Hence, using a Bourdieusian perspective on trust in the context of multicultural leadership renders the notions of leading, practicing culture and trusting as interrelated situated relational processes. It is this intersection of processes that this dissertation aims to illuminate.

### **3.4 A critical discussion of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and its appropriateness for the study of trust in the context of multicultural leadership**

Seeing that Bourdieu's Theory of Practice represents a so-called "Grand Theory", it could be criticized for being too broad, general and abstract (Mills 2000) which allows for the explanation of any social practice. In regard to Bourdieu's main claim of presenting a theory that bridges the alleged opposition of agency and structure, several scholars point out that Bourdieu's Theory of Practices leans towards structuralism and thus fails to "transcend the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism" (Jenkins 1982:270). Jenkins (ibid.) furthermore points out that Bourdieu's theory "remains essentially deterministic and circular - objective structures produce culture, which determines practice, which reproduces those objective structures (...)". A similar criticism is voiced by King (2000) and Lau (2004). King (2000:417) for example points out that "[a]lthough Bourdieu believes that the habitus is compatible with his practical theory and overcomes the impasse of objectivism and subjectivism in social theory, neither claim is the case; the habitus is incompatible with his practical theory, and it retreats quickly into objectivism." Lau (2004:370) asserts that "habitus is stricken with inconsistencies and ambiguities", which at times results in misunderstandings of Bourdieu's concepts (ibid. 374). In addition, Lau (2004) points out that Bourdieu's theory does not reconcile phenomenology and structuralism but, as mentioned by King and Jenkins, seems to favor structuralism.

Despite these criticisms, I consider Bourdieu's social theory as a strong framework for researching trust as a situated relational process in multicultural leadership. As hinted at in section 3.3.2 and 3.3.3, Bourdieu's practice theory enables me to see leadership and trusting as entangled contextualized processes which are influenced by the agents' diverse dispositions to leadership practices and trusting as well as the agents' ongoing relations. Seeing that this study's interactants have different *cultural habitus* which they embodied through their diverse life trajectories, it is

likely that they differ in their perceptions, justifications and enactments of leadership and trust. Hence, Bourdieu's theory of practice offers the possibility to better understand the interplay of structures and agency and thus allows for the generation of a more informed understanding of trusting in multicultural leadership.



## **4. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND APPLIED METHOD**

With a sample of multicultural leader-employee relations embedded in the context of an ethnic sales department of a Danish SME, the purpose of this longitudinal case study was to discover the leaders' and employees' interpretations and experiences of trusting alongside their perceptions of why and how their trusting changed over time. I argue that a better understanding of the multifaceted intersections of leadership, culture and trust might enhance our understanding of trust as a highly contextual and relational process. In order to shed light on this research phenomenon, I addressed three research questions:

1. How did this study's interactants interpret and experience their organizational context and role at ESAG's Department of Ethnic Sales?
2. How did this study's interactants interpret and experience trust in their respective leader-employee relations?
3. What factors did this study's interactants perceive as helpful, which as hampering, and which as critical to trusting?

In this chapter I describe this study's research methodology. In so doing, I discuss the rationale for employing a hermeneutical approach using a qualitative research design. It follows a summary of the information needed and a description of the research sample. Thereafter, I discuss methods of data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical considerations, including issues of this study's trustworthiness and its limitations where I briefly discuss the role of trust in qualitative research on trust.

## 4.1 Rationale for a qualitative research design

The question as to how trust can possibly be researched has led Fergus Lyon, Guido Möllering and Mark Saunders to edit a book on this issue, called: “Handbook of Research Methods on Trust” (Lyon et al. 2011) which covers a variety of quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches to researching trust.

As has been described earlier (see chapter 2) most of the literature on trust takes a rational approach which by means of surveys and experiments aims at identifying, measuring, and predicting antecedents or conditions for (mis)trust and trustworthiness (e.g., Dasgupta, 1988; Gambetta, 1988; Gambetta & Hamill, 2005; Takahashi et al., 2008). Moreover, empirical research on trust has often been conducted in laboratory settings (Wright & Ehnert, 2010) or by using so-called Trust-Games (Möllering et al., 2004:562) based on Social Exchange Theory (Takahashi et al., 2008). Whereas researchers can find a variety of instruments for measuring trust, such as an inventory for assessing conditions of trust (Butler 1991), ‘The Organizational Trust Inventory’ (OTI) by Cummings & Bromiley (1996), or the so-called Behavioral Trust Inventory developed by Gillespie (2003), qualitative research on trust is relatively scarce, at least in the field of Organization Science. Yet, arguably, especially qualitative studies are needed in order to better understand cross-cultural trust building as advocated for by several scholars (see e.g., Möllering et al. 2004; Zaheer & Zaheer 2006; Wright & Ehnert 2010).

Seeing that this study focuses on situated relational trust building processes (see chapter 3) between leaders and their organizational interactants, I deemed it necessary to employ a qualitative approach for a number of reasons: First, it enabled me to better understand the processes by which actions take place and thus understanding the differences and similarities of trusting in the field of ESAG. Second, a qualitative approach assisted me to develop a contextual understanding which is an understanding of the *field* in which trust processes take place. In addition, this study of trust aimed at discovering “new systems of relations among

the elements” (Bourdieu 1991:14; cited in Özbilgin & Tatli 2005:859) of Bourdieu’s Practice Theory, i.e. habitus, field and capital. Thus, in contrast to a purely quantitative research approach, a qualitative approach helped to discover and describe the interplay of habitus, field and capital for the practice of trust by shedding light on the trust processes as influenced and situated in certain *fields*. To understand this interplay, I deemed it necessary to comprehend the interactants socio-cultural backgrounds (*habitus*) and their contextual settings (*field*) as these according to Bourdieu influence the interactants’ perspectives alongside their situated relational practices. Seeing that a given field’s *rules of the game* influence which practices are understood as legitimate and which as deviant, an emic approach to the research field was necessary in order for me, as the researcher, to get some familiarity with the field’s *logic of practice* and its influence on trusting.

In order to learn more about trust in the context of multicultural leadership and thus, the influence of the socio-cultural context on the process of trusting, this study adopted a qualitative case study design following a hermeneutic approach which enabled me to investigate the relationship between culture, multicultural leadership and trusting in an informing circular movement, thus presenting these concepts as interrelated processes. For example, what presented the ‘cultural context’ of trust building changed over the course of this research. During my study over the past 4 years, the case company expanded which resulted in changes to its structure and workforce which again influenced their approach to internal communication and to some extent their take on multicultural leadership. On the other hand, the understanding of what presented and presents the cultural context changed for me as a researcher, i.e. my understanding of what makes up the cultural context of the social actors taking part in my research, how this context may influence their interactions with each other and with me, the researcher, altered over time as I was presented with new impressions which either confirmed, changed or improved my previous understanding of the role of culture in trust building. Thus, by learning more about the parts of the company, their leaders and interactants in the different subsidiaries, I became more knowledgeable about the whole, i.e. the immediate



contextual influence on trust building between the investigated leaders and their employees at a particular time and place, but also the wider context of the phenomenon under study over time. This – in a nutshell – is the essence of hermeneutics which this entire research is based upon. In other words, no one starts understanding the world from a ‘tabula rasa’, as every human being understands the world from her particular “*meaning-field*” (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009:120) which holds “*preconceptions inherited from the past, preconceived meanings*” (ibid.). In order for the pre-understandings to not stand in the way for understanding, Alvesson & Sköldberg (ibid.) refer to Gadamer (1989:306-307) and advocate for

(...) *a constant alternation between merging into another world and linking back into our own reference system. By means of this movement back and forth, we can successively come to an understanding of the unfamiliar reference system, something which also leads to the gradual revising and/or enriching of our own: there is a ‘fusion of horizons’.*

Thus, by moving back and forth between the worlds of this study’s interactants and my own reference system, I continuously enhanced my understanding of the influence of *habitus, field and leadership practices* on the process of trusting; and I will continue to do so in the future. Hence, the knowledge presented in this dissertation is neither relative nor objective but rather a “*provisory rational knowledge (...) which is wavering, evasive yet at the same time at least temporarily valid*” (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009:121).

The most essential part of the hermeneutical process of understanding is arguably the process of interpretation which according to Heidegger (1962; referred to in Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009:120) is always colored by *emotional moods*, and which in itself “(...) *contains the three aspects of time – past, present and future – as indissoluble moments*” (ibid, 121).

While this spiral movement, on one hand, enhanced my understanding of the issue at hand, it has, on the other hand, had implications for the writing process of this

dissertation. Whereas the written product seems to mirror a linear research process, the work and writing processes, however, most definitely followed the non-linear form of the hermeneutic spiral. As such, throughout the research process, the writing presented in this dissertation has been constantly evaluated and re-evaluated, reviewed revisited and reviewed again. As a result, this dissertation presents the fullest ‘provisory rational knowledge’ on issues of multicultural trust building between leaders and their employees within the case of a SME headquartered in Denmark.

By employing the hermeneutical process of understanding and interpretation, I aimed at producing a nuanced, yet holistic understanding of multicultural trust building which may enhance our knowledge on how Bourdieu’s elements of habitus, field and capital influence trust processes in the context of multicultural leadership.

## **4.2 Qualitative case study research**

In order to acquire some personal in-depth understandings of the complex relationship between a person’s dispositions (*habitus*), their given *capital* portfolio and an organization’s structure (*field*) for trusting in the context of multicultural leadership, I deemed it necessary to choose a method, which allowed me to immerse myself as researcher in the different contexts.

A suitable method for discovering how trust between leaders and their employees ‘actually happens’ (Watson, 2011) and how it is influenced by an interplay of structure and agency I see in the case study strategy. A case study design allows the researcher to observe thoroughly how the interactants react to certain events playing out the social and organizational *fields* and how they interpret it. According to Hartley (2004:324), the main emphasis of a case study is “*on understanding processes alongside their (organizational and other) contexts.*” Thus, the case study design enables me to thoroughly describe how trust is understood, built and

maintained between leaders and their employees and how this process is influenced by the given contexts over time.

Another reason for choosing the case study approach has to do with the very research object. As pointed out earlier, the phenomenon under scrutiny, i.e. trust in multicultural leadership interactions across diverse contexts, cannot clearly be disconnected from the contexts in which it is enacted. Consequently, a case study approach is employed since, according to Yin, a case study is especially useful when one wants to study “*a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context [and] when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident*” (Yin 1984: 23). Moreover, a case study as research strategy allows me to engage with the individual employees and the ‘real-life contexts’ in which certain leadership interactions take place. In order to shed light on how and when trust emerges from multicultural leader-employee relations and its situated processes over time, this exploratory case study investigates intra-organizational multicultural leadership interactions and relations. In line with Yin’s conceptualization of case studies, I make use of different qualitative methods of data collection, all of which allow for close interactions between the researcher, this study’s interactants and the diverse ‘real-life’ organizational contexts. Methods of data collection are for instance interviews, participant observations, informal conversations and interactions alongside organizational texts such as the given organization’s website and its internal news magazine.

The interactions under investigation are played out by culturally diverse actors, i.e. they can be understood as representing different national cultures, ethnicities, organizational culture, professions, gender, religion, and educational systems. Nevertheless, all of these diverse actors are employed at one and the same SME, headquartered in Denmark. Primarily within this organizational context, this study will attempt to enrich our understanding of the influence of context or conditions (*fields, habitus*) on processes of intra-organizational trust by taking a practice theoretical perspective. Nevertheless, even though all interactants of this study are part of the ‘same’ organizational context, they do have a variety of different socio-

cultural backgrounds. Moreover, they find themselves and the subsidiaries they work in embedded in a certain social context. Thus, the organizational context (*the field of ESAG*) is influenced by the societal context (*the social field*) in which it is embedded. In other words, intra-organizational multicultural processes of trust between leaders and their employees are, as outlined in chapter 3, most likely influenced by a variety of contextual factors (*overlapping fields, agents' socio-cultural backgrounds*) influencing the agents' perception of a given situation and context and their range of possible actions. Thus, one important contribution of this study is to enhance our comprehension of the complexities of contextual influences on interpersonal trust relations in organizations.

#### **4.2.1 Choosing the case study**

In order to study trust as a situated relational process in the context of multicultural leadership, I needed access to a case company comprised by a diverse workforce in terms of 'culture'. To understand processes of trust relations, I furthermore needed the possibility to observe ongoing multicultural leader-employee interactions over a longer period of time. Therefore, I made a list over companies which most likely would work with multicultural leadership *and* which belonged to my extended network. The latter was important; seeing that research on trust can be understood as research on an organizational sensitive topic, I presumed that company gatekeepers would need to trust me first before granting me access to their company. Since I had been in contact with those companies in my network prior to this study, or I could be introduced to them via a third person, I assumed that it would be somewhat easier to get access to them than to companies which were not part of my extended network. Biased from earlier project collaborations, I firstly contacted bigger global companies; yet, after some time, I contacted a SME headquartered in Denmark which fulfilled – or even exceeded - the criteria mentioned above as they (due to

strategically reasons) employed so-called ‘German-Turks’ and ‘Austro-Turks’ in their respective German or Austrian sales-subsidiaries.

This meant that instead of investigating the influence of culture on trust building from a more or less ‘clear-cut’ idea of one leader and one employee from one and the same company, yet two diverse cultural backgrounds collaborating with each other, I would be studying trust building within the context of multicultural leadership in a SME where Danish leaders were to lead so-called ‘followers’ who would refer to – at least – two cultural backgrounds in terms of ethnicity. Doing trust research at a SME furthermore meant that I could contribute to the rather scarce research on leadership and management research in the domain of SMEs (Nilsson et al. 2012:265). In regard to trust processes, family-owned SMEs seem to be a rather suitable case since “to preserve the organization (...) [they] typically take fewer risks than large firms. On the other hand, they are characterized by a stronger entrepreneurial influence that involves discovering, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities through proactiveness, risk taking, and innovation (...). Following Nilsson et al., SMEs seem to draw on their history and conventional ways of actions which arguably refrain from risk taking while at the same time taking risks to stay competitive or enhance their competitiveness.

#### **4.2.2 Description of case**

As outlined earlier, in December 2012 I was granted fairly broad access to do qualitative field work in two German and one Austrian sales subsidiaries and the HQ of a privately owned Danish SME which I called ESAG. The case company produces and sells food products throughout the world. It was established in Denmark in 1984. After the first explorative interview with the head of sales, I decided to focus my studies on the ethnic sales department since this comprised all aspects necessary to gain more information on trust building in the context of multicultural leadership. In particular, when the head of sales, IDK0, said that ‘*they*

*have issues with trust*’ and, furthermore, that *‘he would like to know what they* (the non-Danish employees at the sales subsidiaries in Germany and Austria) *think of us* (managers and employees at HQ) (Field notes, December 6, 2012), one of the main criterion for a good case of trust research was made explicit: there seemed to be multicultural leader-employee relations where trust should have been present but in actual fact appeared to be weak. Since 1999, the case company has conducted sales activities in the Austrian and German markets. In 2012, a second sales subsidiary was established in the south-western part of Germany aimed at strengthening the presence in one of the main markets for ethnic food products within Europe. The following description of the case company’s HQ and its three sales subsidiaries is based on interviews, informal conversations, and observations made at the four units. Throughout the field studies I developed a deeper understanding of the relationship between these four units and achieved a more holistic insight into the diverse leadership interactions taking place both within and across these units. The following description of the case company’s HQ and sales subsidiaries is meant to provide a broad overview of the structure and context in which the leader-employee relationships between the HQ and the sales subsidiaries take place. It is these relationships that are the actual cases or units of analysis. In other words, this case study is an embedded case study of six leader-employee relationships. However, when doing field work at the different sales subsidiaries, I became aware that the subsidiaries were quite small with regard to the number of employees, and that the experiences made by the local leaders were almost always visible to all employees present at the site. Moreover, if one wanted to, it was possible to eavesdrop on discussions held over the telephone. Thus, I experienced a kind of ‘spill-over effect’, i.e. the local leader openly discussed issues emerging with HQ, and the employees seemed to follow their local leader’s sense-making of these very issues to considerable lengths. Consequently, the perceived HQ or intermediary leader-employee relationships mirrored the perceived overall relationship between the company’s HQ and its sales subsidiaries and vice versa. Hence, I argue that this case study is an embedded case study of six leader-employee relations as well as being a case study of HQ-sales subsidiary relationships.

At **HQ** around 120 employees are led by 14 managers, all of which are male Danes, with the exception of one female manager (IDK2) holding the position of head of sales support. Three of the managers are related to the company's CEO and, in general, the case company understands itself to be a 'family business'. At HQ there are only three formal management levels, four if the local general managers at the Austrian and the German sales subsidiaries are included. In regard to leader-employee relations at **HQ** relevant to my study, I collected qualitative data on interactions between *the Danish leader of sales support (IDK2) from HQ and the Danish-Turkish trainee (ITR5)*. Yet, to contextualize trust building processes, interviews with the Head of Sales IDK0 and observations at the entire department of sales support and ethnic sales were conducted on several occasions (see figure 6 on data collection).

The case company has three sales subsidiaries of which they own 100% and one of which they own 52%. Since the latter also figures under the headline 'sales subsidiaries' (see organizational chart), I started my field work at all four subsidiaries, including the department of ethnic sales and sales support at HQ in January 2013. However, during my fieldwork I learned that the so-called sales subsidiary which only partly belonged to the company was merely a 'partner' or just a 'customer'. This new information led me to concentrate my research on those three sales subsidiaries which belonged 100% to ESAG and were thus also managed from HQ, despite having their own local managers.

In the following, the subsidiaries and the leader-employee relations connected to these subsidiaries are presented:

- a) The *Austrian sales subsidiary* (henceforth referred to as AT) has 8 employees, managed by one female local Austro-Turkish manager and supported by six Danish managers (located at HQ but undertaking infrequent trips to Austria) regarding purchasing, logistics, marketing, accounting, HR, and sales. At the Austrian sales subsidiary there are only two formal management levels; however, the important decisions with

regard to purchasing, marketing, accounting and sales are made by the marketing and sales departments at the Danish HQ. Decisions regarding the Austrian sales subsidiary's personnel and logistics are made by the local manager.

In terms of leader-employee relations relevant to my study, I collected qualitative data on interactions between *the Danish intermediary leader (IDK1) from HQ and the Austro-Turkish sales person (ITR2)* as well as on interactions between *the Danish leader of sales support (IDK2) from HQ and the Austro Turkish warehouse manager (ITR10)B*. However, in order to contextualize trust building processes, interviews and observations of all the members (with Austrian, German, and Austro-Turkish backgrounds) of the Austrian sales subsidiary, including the local Austro-Turkish manager (ITR3) as well as the Danish-Turkish sales-trainee (ITR5), were conducted on several occasions (see figure 6 on data collection).

- b) The *German sales subsidiary located in the eastern part of Germany* (henceforth referred to as DE-E) has only 4 employees. Since September 2012, it has been formally managed by the Danish director of ESAG Germany, who is located at HQ in Denmark. Informally, however, a female German-Turkish employee functions as the head of office, managing the administrative issues of this subsidiary. The main sales person (German with a Turkish background), however, more or less managed himself, though he is supported by a Danish intermediary leader from HQ who spends at least every third week at this sales subsidiary. As is the case with the Austrian sales subsidiary, this German subsidiary is supported by Danish managers located at HQ regarding purchasing, logistics, marketing, accounting, and HR. With the exception of the intermediary leader, the other Danish managers visit this subsidiary only a few times each year. At this sales subsidiary there are two formal management levels; however, the overall decisions regarding this subsidiary are made by the Danish HQ. The



Danish director of ESAG Germany does not seem to influence this process decisively even though he officially holds the authority to do so.

In terms of leader-employee relations relevant to my study, I collected qualitative data on interactions between *the Danish intermediary leader (IDK1) from HQ and a local German-Turkish sales person (ITR1)*. However, in order to contextualize these trust building processes, interviews and observations of all the members (all of which had German-Turkish backgrounds) of this German sales subsidiary were conducted on several occasions (see figure 6 regarding data collection).

- c) The *German sales subsidiary located in the south-western part of Germany* (henceforth referred to as DE-W) was established in 2012, has 6 employees and is managed by one male Danish expatriate manager who is responsible for purchasing, logistics, accounting, the administrative work and, to some extent, the local HR management. Officially, he is led by the director of ESAG Germany, who is located at HQ in Denmark. Furthermore, decisions regarding marketing are made at the marketing department at HQ.

At this subsidiary, qualitative data on the following leader-employee relationships were collected: First, data on the relationship between *the Danish HR manager/director of ESAG Germany (IDK4) and the local Danish manager (IDK3)* were collected. Second, the relationships between *the local Danish manager (IDK3) and the local German-Turkish sales persons and warehouse manager (ITR7-9; ITR4)* were investigated. However, in order to obtain a broader and more holistic understanding of trust development in the above-mentioned relationships, interviews and observations of all the members of this German sales subsidiary were conducted, including with the Danish-Turkish sales-trainee (ITR5). Once more, data collection occurred on several occasions (see figure 6 regarding data collection).

The following chart provides an overview over the leader-employee relations I investigated throughout my studies at ESAG.

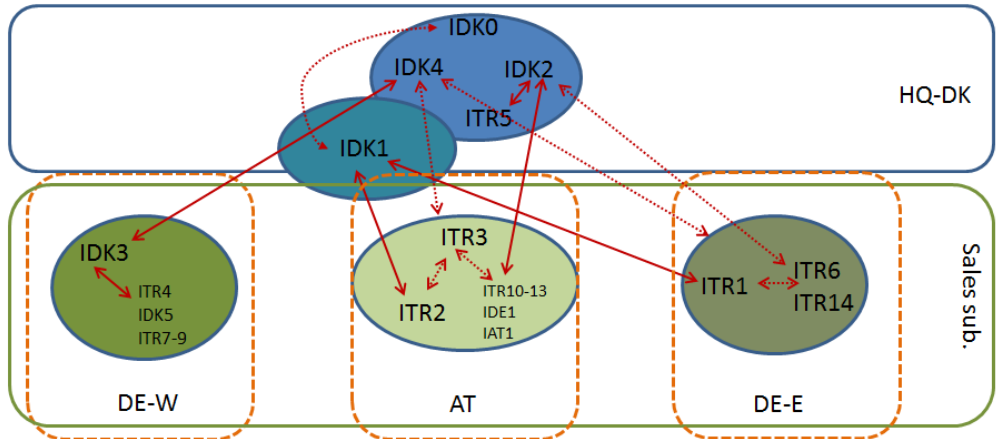


Figure: 4: Overview on the six embedded leader-employee relations (solid red lines) in the department of Ethnic Sales at HQs and its three subsidiaries (DE-W, AT, DE-E)

In summary, this case study resembles a cross-level explorative case study of six embedded cases as it contains more than one subunit of analysis (Yin 1984), namely the aforementioned leader-employee relations. Thus, this case study does not focus on the whole unit, i.e. on the entire organization or the entire subsidiary as such. Rather, it focuses on contrasting the leader-employee cases within the whole organization. However, even though the primary focus is on the six embedded cases, the organization as a whole, its culture, structure and history are vital parts of the contextual framework in which all six cases are embedded. Therefore, whenever my interactants referred to certain contextual factors, such as preferred practices on the ethnic food market, as influencing their methods of building trust with their co-workers or leaders, I deemed it relevant to additionally address and discuss these issues in light of the existing literature in order to achieve a more holistic

understanding of situated relational trust building in the context of multicultural leadership.

### **4.3 Data collection, processing and feedback**

As highlighted by Saunders (2011:110): “Trust research invariably asks questions about sensitive issues, highlighting the need to build rapport and trust between the researcher and participant.” Following Saunders, I approached the research field, i.e. the case company and this thesis’ interactants in such a way that trust could be gained by being open and making my research topic salient to the company and its members. In line with Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), I ensured anonymity and privacy and explained the aim, process and possible benefits of my research upfront. Since most of the interviews took place during scheduled observations, I furthermore made sure to engage in informal conversations with the interactants before conducting semi-structured in-depths interviews with them. In our small talks we often spoke about our families, hobbies and other none-work related aspects and thus we got to know each other and learned about things we had in common, which almost always was the case. Once some first-hand impressions were gained and I had the feeling that some rapport had been established, I scheduled the interviews with the interactants in terms of suitable time slots, workdays, and interview settings. In the case of the sales personnel, some interviews were held during their lunch breaks at some café on their scheduled customer-route and sometimes in their car while being on customer visits. Most often, interviews with HQ personnel were held in a meeting room at HQs and interviews at the subsidiaries wherever convenient, sometimes in the office and sometimes in the warehouse (see pictures below for examples of interview settings).





Figure 5: Examples of interview settings

Nonetheless, revealing one's research topic from the onset of the study may bias the interactants' responses to interview questions considering that they might be more conscious about their answers as stated by Saunders (2011:111). In order to bridge the gap between sensitizing this study's interactants about my research focus on trust, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, not violating the interactants' right to be informed about my study, I introduced them to the study as 'a research on multicultural leadership and collaboration, including trust building'. Arguably, seeing trust as one small element of the major subject of leadership and collaboration may have turned the interactants' focus towards these subjects rather than the issue of trust. In any case, in light of Alvesson's critical take on interviews (Alvesson 2003), any interview no matter the subject should be approached in a reflexive manner as interviews are influenced by a variety of simultaneous processes such as "identity work", "cultural script application", "moral storytelling", and "political action" (Alvesson 2003:15). Hence, interviewees' answers are colored by

and may express the interviewees' political stance, cultural background, preferred identification, and position and positioning in relation to their loyalty toward the company and thus, their understanding of morality.

In order to ensure the quality of this research, I triangulated qualitative interview data with observational data in a longitudinal case study design nested in a hermeneutical approach to trust. In the following, I discuss the hermeneutic approach, the rationale for a case study design and the data collection methods and data analysis.

#### **4.3.1 A hermeneutical approach to trust**

According to Breeman (2011:149), “[hermeneutic] is particularly useful to gain insights into the different intentions of all the parties involved. It connects the actual human interactions with intentions. The strong asset of the hermeneutic method is that it aims not only to understand a specific event, but also to identify general, objective patterns of human interaction.” Nested in the paradigm of contemporary hermeneutics (Blaikie 2010:81) which draws on Gadamer’s notion of the researcher going into dialogue with the ‘text’ to achieve a ‘fusion of horizons’, I understand individuals as interpretative social beings who together with other social actors shape and re-shape their subjective realities. Thus, conducting observations and listening to the leaders’ and employees’ conversations with each other and their co-workers helped to explore practices of multicultural leadership as they occurred in the everyday work life. Since individuals have their own specific ways of sense-making, the observations made were supplemented with interviews in order to discuss what I had perceived during the observations, and vice versa (Kvale 1996). Thus, on one hand, the unit of analysis (de Vaus 2002) is the ongoing leader-employee relation, which means the focus is placed on the individual and the dyad. Nevertheless, following the hermeneutic (and for that matter, interpretivist) approach, dyads (and the individuals within it) perform within and act in response to the groups, subsidiaries, and the overall department they are a part of. Thus, this

study focusses on multiple units of analysis, by understanding the dynamics of leadership between individuals, within and between groups (local and HQ-based sales personnel; sales personnel and sales support), and the department of Ethnic Sales as a whole).

From the very beginning of conducting field work at the case company, I experienced that researching trust in and across a diverse workforce would be a sensitive and emotional endeavor for both the interactants and me as a researcher and human being. Their positions and positionings in the *field of ESAG*, cultural and social identification (*habitus*) and tacit as well as conscious sense-making (*practical sense*) of the interactants was very often accompanied with the expression of emotions. Especially when the interactants started to trust me as a researcher and person, their narratives changed from a more “matter-of-fact” style to expressing their personal meanings, emotions, attitudes, and potential future actions towards certain ways of multicultural leadership. Thus, it became evident that leadership and trust in a multicultural context are concepts that involve emotions and personal attitudes alongside social and cultural identification processes. As a consequence, these experiences led me to choose a theoretical framework which would account for the interplay of structures and positions and emotions and subjectivity in trust building in the context of multicultural leadership interactions. Hence, pressures from the field made me to adjust my theoretical framework accordingly, leading me to employ an adapted version of Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice on trust literature taking a relational and process perspective.

Following the hermeneutic approach, throughout the research process I observed ‘what was happening’ (Watson 2011) in the leader-employee relations within HQs, the two German and the Austrian sales subsidiaries and contrasted this with theories I had accessed already. Whenever I encountered issues of which I could not make any sense (such as the means of decision making), I retrieved literature that could explain these issues from a variety of perspectives. Thus, by using the hermeneutical spiral trust building in multicultural leadership could be continually analyzed as a whole, but then specific aspects of the six leader-employee relations could also be

investigated, followed by making sense of the HQ-subsidary relationships, and then looking at the whole again. This process was repeated several times which led to a quite nuanced and holistic understanding of the context of trust building in multicultural leadership at ESAG.

Even though the overall research took an iterative approach by employing the hermeneutic process, data was also collected in a step-by-step way as presented in the table below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Data collected</b>
<b>Dec. 6, 2012</b>	First meeting with the contact person at the company. Presentation of ideas, structure and timeline of my research (Conversation time: approx. 2 hrs.)
<b>Dec. 21, 2012</b>	Meeting with the HR manager at the HQ, who gave a presentation on the company's background and structure. I received a copy of the organizational chart, which formed the basis for the discussion regarding which leader-employee relationships I could follow. I received their contact data and the green light to start my research. An oral non-disclosure agreement was made. (Interview time: 1 hr. 15 min.)
<b>Jan. 9, 2013</b>	Interview conducted with the head of accounting at HQ (Interview time: 1 hr. 20 min.)
<b>Apr. 8, 2013</b>	Interview with an intermediary sales leader for the ethnic market at HQ (Interview time: 1 hr. 19 min.)
<b>Apr. 9, 2013</b>	Interview with the intermediary sales leader (IDK1) for the ethnic market at HQ (Interview time: 1 hr. 22 min.)



- Apr. 11, 2013** Interview with the head of sales support (IDK2) at HQ (Interview time: 2 hrs.)
- May 13-15, 2013** Observations at the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany (DE-W), including hours of informal conversations with the local manager (IDK3) and the sales support (IDK5)
- May 13, 2013** Interview with the local manager (IDK3) of the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany (Interview time: 56 min.)
- May 13, 2013** Interview with the storage worker/sales support (ITR4) at the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany (Interview time: 25 min.)
- May 14, 2013** Interview with the sales support (IDK5) at the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany (Interview time: 55 min.)
- May 15, 2013** Interview with ITR9 a sales person from the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany at a restaurant about 70 km away from the sales subsidiary (Interview time: 26 min.)
- May 16-17, 2013** Observations at the sales subsidiary in Austria (AT), including hours of informal conversations with the local manager (ITR3) and the sales support (ITR13; IDE1)
- May 16, 2013** Interview with the head of accounting (IAT1) at the sales subsidiary in Austria (Interview time: 13 min.)
- May 16, 2013** Interview with the local manager (ITR3) at the sales subsidiary in Austria (Interview time: 2 hrs. 22 min.)
- May 16, 2013** Interview with the warehouse and order manager (ITR10) at the sales subsidiary in Austria (Interview time: 46 min.)

- May 16, 2013** Lunch meeting with the local manager (ITR3); later invitation to her home
- May 17, 2013** Interview with the local manager (ITR3) at the sales subsidiary in Austria (Interview time: 48 min.)
- May 17, 2013** Interview with the sales support (ITR13) at the sales subsidiary in Austria (Interview time: 39 min.)
- May 17, 2013** Interview with the sales support (IDE1) at the sales subsidiary in Austria (Interview time: 27 min.)
- June 3-5, 2013** Observations at the sales subsidiary in the eastern part of Germany (DE-E), including hours of informal conversations with the sales support/local admin. manager (ITR6), sales support (ITR14) and sales person (ITR1)
- June 4, 2013** Interview with the intermediary leader from HQ (IDK1) during his visit to the sales subsidiary in the eastern part of Germany (Interview time: 1 hr. 6 min.)
- June 4, 2013** Interview with the sales person (ITR1) at the sales subsidiary in the eastern part of Germany (Interview time: 1 hr. 25 min.)
- June 4, 2013** Interview with the sales support/local admin. manager (ITR6) at the sales subsidiary in the eastern part of Germany (Interview time: 1 hr. 9 min.)
- June 4, 2013** Lunch meeting with the intermediary leader (IDK1) from HQ and the main sales person (ITR1) from the sales subsidiary in the eastern part of Germany
- June 5, 2013** Interview with the sales support (ITR14) at the sales subsidiary in

	the eastern part of Germany (Interview time: 1 hr. 10 min.)
<b>Sept. 25-26, 2013</b>	Taped observation of the sales-meeting/evaluation between the intermediary leader (IDK1) from HQ with the local manager and sales person (ITR2) at the sales subsidiary in Austria (Time: 7 hrs. 36 min.)
<b>Sept. 25, 2013</b>	Lunch meeting with the intermediary leader (IDK1) and marketing manager from HQ and the local manager (ITR3) and sales person (ITR2) from the sales subsidiary in Austria
<b>Jan. 20, 2014</b>	Presentation and discussion (audio-taped) of the first summary report with four members of the sales department at HQ, including the sales director (IDK0) (Time: 2 hrs. 12 min.) [at this point the final decision was taken to no longer include the subsidiary/partner in north-western Germany/NL]
<b>Feb. 5, 2014</b>	Interview with the export director of ethnic sales at HQ (Interview time: 1 hr. 20 min.)
<b>Apr. 10, 2014</b>	Observation of the first feedback/evaluation of a Turkish sales trainee (ITR5) together with the head of sales support (IDK2) and the HR manager (IDK4) at HQ (Time: 41 min.)
<b>Apr. 22-25, 2014</b>	Observation of working style at ethnic sales and sales support at HQ; including informal conversations over lunch meetings
<b>Apr. 23, 2014</b>	Interview with the Turkish sales trainee (ITR5) at HQ (Interview time: 1 hr. 56 min.)
<b>Apr. 28 – May 2, 2014</b>	Observation of working style and the ‘Monday’-meeting between sales persons (ITR7-9) and the local manager (IDK3) at the sales-

	subsidiary in south-western Germany and during customer visits
<b>Apr. 28, 2014</b>	Interview with the sales person (ITR9) at the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany (Interview time: 31 min.)
<b>Apr. 29, 2014</b>	Interview with the sales person (ITR8) at the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany (Interview time: 30 min.)
<b>Apr. 29, 2014</b>	Interview with the sales person (ITR7) from the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany in his car on the way to meet customers (Interview time: 44 min.)
<b>May 1, 2014</b>	Interview with the sales support (IDK5) at the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany (Interview time: 30 min.)
<b>May 2, 2014</b>	Interview with the local manager (IDK3) from the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany at FRA Airport (Interview time: 37 min.)
<b>June 10-13, 2014</b>	Observation of working style at the sales subsidiary in the eastern part of Germany, including observational data on the HR manager's (IDK4) visit of this subsidiary (Partly audio-taped)
<b>June 12, 2014</b>	Interview with the HR manager (IDK4) from HQ (but present in the function as director of ESAG Germany) at the sales subsidiary in the eastern part of Germany (Interview time: 2 hrs.)
<b>June 13, 2014</b>	Interview with the sales support/local admin. manager (ITR6) at the sales subsidiary in the eastern part of Germany (Interview time: 53 min.)
<b>June 13, 2014</b>	Observation of the sales person's (ITR1) daily work with customers in the eastern part of Germany

- June 30, 2014** Observation of the second feedback/evaluation of the Turkish sales trainee (ITR5) together with the head of sales support (IDK2) and the HR manager (IDK4) at HQ
- Sep. 8 – 11, 2014** Observation of a presentation of a new product (Sep. 8) and sales course for all sales people of the ethnic sales department (HQ, Austrian and German subsidiaries) including the HR-manager/director of ESAG Germany (IDK4) at a hotel very close to the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany
- Sep. 8, 2014** Dyadic interview with the sales support (IDK5) and sales trainee (ITR5) at the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany (Interview time: 51 min.)
- Sep. 10, 2014** I hold and tape a slide presentation summarizing trust, including a discussion with sales personnel on my first impressions of the sales course (Instructor of the sales course requested this) (Time: 23 min.)
- Sep. 10, 2014** Longer informal conversation with the instructor of the sales course
- Sep. 10, 2014** Informal audio-taped conversation with the sales person from Austria (ITR2) and the sales trainee (ITR5) after the sales course (Interview time: 27 min); informal conversation continued on the balcony, however this not taped
- Sep. 11, 2014** Dyadic interview with the storage assistant/sales support (ITR4) and local manager (IDK3) at the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany (Interview time: 1 hr. 39 min.)
- Oct. 15, 2014** Feedback of my impressions regarding the sales course to the HR manager/director of ESAG Germany (IDK4) at HQ; later informal

conversation with the director of sales at HQ (IDK0)

- Oct. 20, 2014** Feedback from the sales trainee (ITR5) and local manager (M) of the sales subsidiary in south-western Germany regarding the sales course via a telephone call
- Nov. 11, 2014** Interview with Sales Director (IDK0) at HQ (Interview time: 1 hr. 36 min.)
- Aug. 25, 2015** Presentation and discussion (audio-taped) of the second summary report with members of all sales departments and marketing at HQ, including ESAG's CEO (Time: 2 hrs. 21 min.)

Figure 6: Overview on the data collected (interviews and observations)

The empirical material was continuously juxtaposed with the existing literature on interpersonal, intra-organizational trust in cross-cultural leadership contexts (see chapter 2) and this dissertations' conceptualization of trust from a Bourdieusian perspective (see chapter 3) which was adopted after the first cycle of hermeneutic procedure during which my preunderstanding of the influence of culture on trusting was altered in course of newly found patterns of explanation which led to a new understanding of the whole (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009:104). The circle movement between a given text (the empirical material gathered during fieldwork), the dialogue with the text (interpretation of the text), the sub-interpretation (emerging patterns of plausibility for the text at hand), and the pattern of interpretation (emerging patterns of plausibility for the whole) can be visualized as a continuous movement between preunderstanding and understanding.

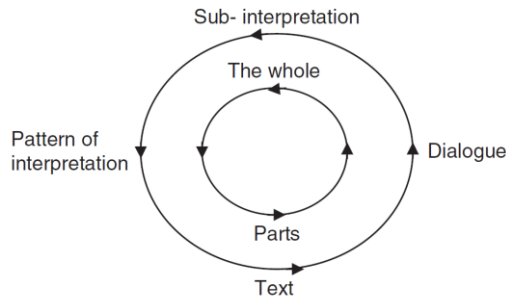


Figure 6: The hermeneutic circle (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009:104)

In this process, the enablers, hurdles, and decisive factors for trusting emerged from the data. When this happened, the main writing process of this monograph started. Its reflections were partially presented at the case company's HQ and subsidiaries, which led to new processes of sense-making through the contrasting and substantiating of my understanding of the interactants' experiences with their own sense-making. Hence, in a hermeneutic sense, by discussing my frequently changing *pre-understandings* with my interactants, I attempted to obtain a better understanding of the interactants' reference systems and thus, hoped for a '*fusion of our horizons*' to occur.

#### 4.3.2 Qualitative Interviewing

Following the theoretical considerations outlined in chapter 3 and based on my experiences made in the field, research on trust as a situated relational process should describe and analyze a variety of aspects, including their changes and their influence on trust through time. These aspects are:

- The context or situation (the field and its power structures) in which a certain relationship takes place: The conditions for trust.

- Situated subjective relational sense-making of the situation, the other person and the unfolding relationship: The interpretation of trust.
- Practices of trust in relationship processes: The experiences of trust

In the theory chapter I stated that trust emerges from relationships as the actors involved align their practical senses, a process that I understand to involve the aforementioned aspects. Thus, when researching trust as a situated relational process embedded in the context of multicultural leadership, I deem it necessary to focus on data that provide information on the context, the subjective sense-making and understanding of trust and the unfolding relationship. Consequently, I chose to conduct a longitudinal interpretative case study in order to capture how contextual and situational changes impact trust building and vice versa. Before I outline and substantiate the choices made in terms of data collection and analysis, I outline how trust is operationalized.

Not surprisingly, the operationalization of trust depends on one's definition of trust (Lewicki & Brinsfield 2011). In this dissertation, trust has been defined as a situated relational practice which emerges from the interplay of perceived familiarity, justification processes and the situated relationship a given actor is engaged in. By adding Emirbayer & Mische's (1998) conceptualization of agency to Bourdieu's relational theory, trusting as a situated relational practice emerges from the interplay of agency through the interrelated elements of iteration, projectivity, practical evaluation, habitus, and practical sense, all of which social actors draw from in different quantities in certain fields or contexts with their constraining and enabling power structures.

Hence, trust is understood to be a multifaceted phenomenon. It is conceptualized as being a multimodal and multi-spatial subjective practice comprising cognitive, affective and behavioral processes (see e.g. Lewis & Weigert 1985; Solomon & Flores 2001) and influenced by the individual social actors' sense-making processes (*practical sense*), which in turn are influenced by the individuals' prior experiences (*habitus*), the relationship itself (*situated relational practices*), and the various



contexts (*fields*) these take place in. Hence, trust is not simply a conscious practice, but rather influenced by culture and emotions, and as such it is a process which is made sense of in hindsight when interactants speak about fairness, openness, reliability, and trust in relation to their experiences of multicultural leadership. When interactants openly discuss work-related critical incidents, both with each other and with me in the role of the researcher, I understand them to exemplify trusting behavior towards each other and me.

In order to tap into the interactants' understandings of trust as a reasonable practice in leader-employee relations, qualitative exploratory and semi-structured interviews were conducted (see figure 6). Choosing this mode of data collection meant that the interactants were relatively free to talk about their experiences of trust and trust building in leadership as it occurred in their daily work life. Yet, in order to research the influence of culture on trust building between leaders and their interactants, most of the interviews were semi-structured. Thus, interview guides had been prepared prior to the interviews. The interview guide was not based on very concrete questions but rather contained keywords and subject areas which had to be addressed in order to shed light on trust in the context of multicultural leadership. The keywords derived from literature on trust, leadership and culture, and were furthermore adjusted to the pressures of the field, i.e. information gained from continued observations and interviews at ESAG. As a consequence, following the hermeneutical approach, the interview guide changed slightly from interview to interview as new knowledge about the phenomenon of multicultural trust building was gained. For example, when I learned that ESAG's subsidiary employees with Turkish backgrounds actually considered themselves to be bicultural, I asked for more detail into their perception of culture and its possible influence on their relation with their leaders. At the same time, the theoretical framework was adjusted as well. For instance, the aforementioned example led me to read literature on biculturalism which resulted in me paying special attention to the interactants' cultural *habitus*. Additionally, depending on the organizational positions taken by

the interviewees, the interview guides were slightly different from each other; yet, in all interviews, four broad issues were covered:

- 1) The interactants' professional and personal backgrounds, current role and position in ESAG, and their orientation regarding the work and cooperation between HQ, intermediary leaders and sales subsidiaries.
- 2) Questions addressing the relationships and interactions between leaders and their so-called 'followers', i.e. with whom, why, how often, how, and where these interactions took place and how they have developed over time.
- 3) Questions related to the topic of culture, including if and how the interactants perceived cultural differences and how these influenced their interactions with the perceived culturally other.
- 4) Questions focusing on the topic of trust, including what is understood by trust, what interactions and practices foster or hinder trust and how their trust-relationships had developed over time, including questions as to why this development happened as it did within the leader-employee relationships.

According to Kvale (1996:6), a semi-structured interview is "(...) an interview whose purpose is to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena." Employing semi-structured interviews rather than structured interviews, provided me to stay flexible in regard to what questions to ask, which follow-up questions to pose, and when to ask probing questions to obtain more detail. For example, I asked the HR-manager to clarify what it meant by working according to the matrix structure. Besides providing flexibility, semi-structured interviews are also a means to make the interactant "reflect on the processes leading up to or following from an event" as asserted by Bryman (2004: 281). These aspects not only allowed me to gain a better understanding of how the interactants of this study interpreted their 'reality' at ESAG but it also enabled me to follow up on emerging topics for example the issue

of internal promotions at ESAG. All interviews were taped; the exploratory interviews at the beginning of the study were partly transcribed with parts written as summaries and almost all semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim. Since in this thesis the purpose of transcribing the interviews was to extract meaning of the interactants' statements, rather than a linguistic analysis, I employed a relatively basic transcription approach. Yet, in order to stay as close to the spoken language as deemed necessary to extract the interactants' meaning, communicative features such as longer pauses and expressions of emotions made along with the spoken word were transcribed. The figure below depicts the codes used in the transcripts.

<i>Code used</i>	<i>Meaning of code used</i>
Q	The interviewer
A	The interactant
...	Short pause, less than 3 seconds
[x sec. break]	Longer break of x seconds
[? 45:33]	The words spoken at recording time 45:33 have not been understood
[A slight laugh]	The content of squared brackets explains what movements or other audible incidents happened during the interview

Figure 7: Overview on codes used in transcripts

Seeing that interactants may say one thing and do something entirely different, I triangulated interviews with overt participant observations.

### **4.3.3 Qualitative observations**

As mentioned in the introduction and chapter 2.3.6 (conceptualizing intercultural trust), the meaning of trust may differ across cultures (Lane & Bachmann, 1996; Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006), i.e. the construction of trust may also differ across cultures. In other words, there may be a variety of cultural processes which could foster trust; yet, they differ between people as their way of making sense of certain interactions and contexts differ. The best way to get a deeper understanding of the diverse contexts, interactants, and cultural processes is to ask questions about these issues but also to experience the settings myself. Thus, I spent time together with the interactants and learn about their daily-life environments; in other words, besides conducting qualitative interviews, collecting observational data would further enhance my understanding of the cultural processes related to situated relational trust building.

As visualized in figure 6 (Overview of data collection), between December 2012 and December 2014, I spent a total of 42 days at the case company's department of Ethnic Sales. During this time, I moved back and forth between four different sites (the company's headquarters and three of its subsidiaries), and after each field trip I left for home. Furthermore, I used all time spent for interviews, to also gather observational data and thus, over time, managed to get close to some of the interactants; so close that some of them would even invite me to their homes. Thus, to a high extent I managed to gain their trust which enabled me to get valuable in-depth data.

In sum, this study adds features of ethnography to a case study design. According to Smith (Smith, 2005:145), "[t]he ethnographer is the one who's looking, asking questions, wanting to discover what people are doing and how people are putting things together." In other words, observations and interviews are the main methods of data collection resulting in thick descriptions aiming at interpreting social life from the perspective of the interactants. Using an interpretivist approach to the

research, however, meant that I became the primary research instrument of my own study. This has had certain implications for the processes of data collection and analyses. One of the main consequences has been to reflect on the reflexivity of my work. In other words, my own personal, cultural and professional background not only influenced how I interacted – and built trust - with the members of the researched organization but they also affected how I approached this research. In order to tackle the issue of ‘researcher reflexivity’, I choose to work according to Alvesson & Sköldberg’s (2011) hermeneutic approach which had certain implications for the researcher-researched relationship which is discussed in the following section.

#### **4.3.4 The relationship between the researcher and the researched**

A direct consequence of the above mentioned ‘close encounters’ between the subjects of investigation and the researcher is that this research has to be understood as a constructive process. This means that as a researcher, I interacted with the people and the context to be researched when being in the field. Thus, the process of data collection undoubtedly has been tainted by collective sense-making processes on both the side of the researcher and the researched. Hence, any data collected in this fieldwork has to be understood as a common construction of meanings between the researcher and the researched. Consequently, in line with, for example, Perry (2012) and Andersen & Andersen (1984:328) who refer to Argyle & Dean (1965), and Ickes et al. (1990:732) I use the term ‘interactant’ rather than ‘informant’ to refer to all the organizational members I engaged with during my fieldwork. Choosing the term ‘interactant’ makes it more clear that all ‘information’ gathered was a result of interactions and collaborations in a social context which resulted in collective sense-making rather than in a ‘one-way information sharing process’. For example, when looking back on experiences made during fieldwork, I had many encounters with the organizational members which were not about information

gathering as such. I spent, for instance, many hours in informal conversations, either during coffee and lunch breaks, at dinner or while traveling together. During these informal interactions we primarily would speak about personal experiences made outside the work-setting. An important aspect for me throughout these conversations was to be as open as possible in regard to information about my person, my past experiences and my future aspirations. It can be said that these face-to-face encounters helped me to get to know the interactants and vice versa. Thus, informal interactions became a tool to foster trusting relationships in which the interactants learned about me, and I about them. Hence, the innumerable hours of informal interactions characterized by openly giving and taking information seemed to be well spent as they nurtured trust between the interactants and me. This trust in turn enabled me to get close to the interactants, so close that I even got invited to a wedding.

Yet, this two-way communication style was not only present in informal interactions but also during sessions of data collection. Especially interviews and observations carried out in the second year of my research were clearly characterized by interactions and not that much by me getting simply informed by the 'informants'. For instance, during a one-day meeting in September 2013, interactants involved me in a discussion on possible changes in their marketing strategy. Moreover, at the end of several interviews, interactants made suggestions as to how my findings would improve their everyday working life. What is more, some interactants would speak openly about quite challenging work-related encounters which visualized the context of their work very well.

In sum, it seems that using the term 'informant' for 'my subjects of research' does not mirror the experiences made in my fieldwork; neither does this expression reflect the two-way processes of collective sense-making and meaning construction prevalent in the interviews, observations, and analyses carried out in this study. In order to signify these processes, I decided to use the expression 'interactant' when referring to those organizational members I interacted with during my fieldwork.

#### 4.3.5 Data analysis

Following a hermeneutic approach, data collection and data analysis were developed together in an iterative process as explicated earlier (see section 4.3.1). Broadly speaking, the obtained data was analyzed, i.e. should be made sense of, as soon as possible, both in its own right but also in relation to the whole. Therefore, I listened and re-listened to the interviews, and read and re-read the interview transcripts and field notes in order to understand what issues and topics the interviewees and interactants touched on in relation to how they understood and experienced trust building at ESAG, the case company. During this early and continuous process of data analysis, I worked with manual ad-hoc coding. This coding style fits very well with the hermeneutic approach as outlined by Alvesson & Sköldbberg (2011) as it begins by applying a predetermined list of codes to judge a researcher-generated proposition, i.e. my *preunderstanding* of trust building in the context of multicultural leadership. The codes were developed from a theory/prediction regarding what would be found in the data. However, this part of first cycle coding also included the first steps of *causation coding*. According to Miles et al. (2013:79), causation coding “discern[s] motives, belief systems, worldviews, processes, recent histories, interrelationships, and the complexity of influences and effects on human actions and phenomena.” Thus, this coding style extracts attributes or causal beliefs about how and why particular outcomes come about, and hence can be used to map a process as a CODE 1 > CODE 2 > CODE 3 sequence.

However, the proper coding of all data collected did not start before the winter of 2014, i.e. after almost all the data had been gathered. Using NVivo 10, all data were once more coded according to the first cycle mentioned above (*ad-hoc coding* and *causation coding*), while also including *attribute coding*, i.e. the coding of basic descriptive information such as fieldwork setting and participant characteristics. Following this first cycle, I aimed to find reoccurring patterns in the codes that had

been created so far. In other words, similar codes were clustered together to create a smaller number of *categories or pattern codes*. This step marked the beginning of the second cycle of codes. Thereafter, the interrelationships of the categories with each other within each case (leader-employee relation) and across all cases (across the subsidiaries and HQ) were constructed in order to develop higher level analytic meanings for the propositions of obstacles, enablers and critical success factors, and thus for changes in situated relational trust building in leader-employee relationships over time.

To achieve this holistic understanding, I adopted the aforementioned hermeneutic approach incorporating an adapted version of Bourdieu's field analysis since "the field is a critical mediation between the practices of those who partake of it and the surrounding social and economic conditions" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1996:105).

According to Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1996:104f), a field analysis is comprised by the analysis of three interrelated levels of analyses:

*First, one must analyze the position of the field vis-à-vis the field of power. (...) Second, one must map out the objective structure of the relations between the positions occupied by the agents or institutions who compete for the legitimate form of specific authority of which this field is the site. And third, one must analyze the habitus of agents, the different systems of dispositions they have acquired by internalizing a determinate type of social and economic condition (...).*

In relation to this study on trust, I conceptualized the case company ESAG as a field, seeing that according to Bourdieu (2005:197) "the firm (...) in reality, itself functions as a field." In that sense, the first level of analysis can be understood as analyzing the relationship between ESAG and the economic and political systems of society. In regard to this study, the first level analysis would thus have to explore what is expected of this business and how it is organized and what does it aim at; thus, this level of analysis would reveal what is valued and legitimate. At the second level, the different agents and subfields within the field of ESAG have to be analyzed in terms of their position within the entire field of ESAG. The third level of



analysis is directed to the individuals' habitus involved in the field of ESAG. In this study on trust, I focused mainly on level 2 and 3 when analyzing how the organizational members' habitus (level 3) influenced their practical sense of trusting and their positioning at ESAG (level 2). Furthermore, the individuals' habitus were linked to the socio-cultural structures of their upbringing on a societal level and the legitimate ways of acting within it. The relation between the field of ESAG and the powers of the economic and political fields (level 1) were not addressed in depth, yet described through the notions made by this study's interactants.<sup>4</sup>

Arguably this study's analysis of trusting in the field of ESAG inspired by Bourdieu's tools of field analysis fits well with an overall hermeneutic approach. Seeing that Bourdieu's field analysis aims at understanding the interplay of habitus, capital, the field and the meta-field of power, the hermeneutical approach seems to present a relevant method to gain a better understanding of the relationship between these elements in order to understand the possible relationship between what Gadamer (2004:189) calls the *parts* (the individuals' *habitus*) and the *whole* (in this case the *field* of ESAG).

## 4.4 Ethical Considerations

Any research faces ethical issues concerning the protection of the given study's interactants (Miles et al. 2013). As mentioned above, interactants of a given study should be informed about the research process and its purpose. I ensured this in two ways; first, the case company was informed about my research and second, each interview was initiated by a presentation of my research during which I also promised to respect the interactants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality. The steps taken to guarantee the protection and rights of this study's interactants were as follows:

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<sup>4</sup> Section 5.5 in the analysis chapter presents a field analysis inspired by Bourdieu

First, I ensured to get informed consent in writing prior to data collection. Second, I informed all interactants about the research and their rights to deny their participation at any time during the data collection process. Third, all names of the interactants, the company and its products or other identifiers were kept confidential. Fourth, I ensured to keep research-related records and data safe and did not make them available to any other person.

## **4.5 The quality and limitations of this study**

This dissertation is based on qualitative empirical data collected in a case study design analyzed by employing a hermeneutic approach together with a variety of coding styles. According to Guba & Lincoln (1982) a research such as this one should strive to be trustworthy, i.e. it should ensure credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

### **4.5.1 Quality criteria**

Guba & Lincoln's (1982) abovementioned aspects of trustworthiness relate to the terms of validity (internal and external validity) and reliability (the consistency of measurements over time) used in quantitative inquiries. Due to the characteristics of qualitative research outlined above, especially the researcher's role as the 'instrument of data collection' led me to discuss this study's quality according to Guba & Lincoln's criteria of *trustworthiness* which I will deliberate in the following sections.

#### **Credibility**

This criterion of credibility mirrors the criterion of validity in quantitative research. Thus, in order to achieve credible research, the findings of this dissertation have to

be found credible from the perspective of the researcher, this study's interactants, and the reader.

In order to enhance this study's credibility, I took a variety of steps: first, my use of data and method triangulation. In combining exploratory, semi-structured interviews and observations with secondary data (the organization's internal News Magazine) which I gathered from multiple sources, a more complete and richer portrait of trusting in the context of multicultural leadership could be achieved. Second, I explained my assumptions in regard to the research phenomenon up front (see chapter 1) and clarified the steps taken in the analysis (see this chapter and chapter 5). In addition, I used the revisits to the different research sites to present the pre-analyses of the interviews and observations made to the participating interactants. Additionally, I held two feedback sessions at HQ. In both instances, interactants had the possibility to 'correct' my new-preunderstandings. In most of the cases, interactants shared my understanding of the phenomenon under research. However, in the case of the last feedback to HQ, which in turn also presented a data source, the finding of lack of information sharing and its impact on trusting was heavily debated. This debate led to a more nuanced view on information sharing issues which are discussed in the analysis chapter. Furthermore, the methodological approach and the findings were presented and discussed at various PhD workshops and the PhD pre-defense. In addition, I discussed my findings with professional colleagues in order to ensure that the 'reality' of this study's interactants was sufficiently mirrored in the findings.

### **Dependability**

The notion of dependability refers to the criterion of reliability used in quantitative research. Reliability is ensured if the findings made can be replicated by other researchers conducting a similar study. Seeing that this study is based on qualitative interviews and observations nested in diverse contexts, reliability is usually impossible to achieve. Therefore, Guba & Lincoln (1982) proposed the criteria of dependability which is fulfilled if the findings show consistency and are dependable

with the empirical material gathered. This is not to say that inconsistency should be excluded from the study but rather made sense of in terms of when they occur. Thus, the communication and documentation of all steps taken in this research, which Lincoln and Guba (1982) termed 'audit trail', are important for providing transparency of the study and thus enable the reader to follow the process. The current chapter is part of the 'audit trail' as it accounts for the choices made during this study. Furthermore, the codes used were described in detail in the NVivo program in order to make coding consistent. Nevertheless, due to this study's contextuality, it most probably cannot be replicated by other researchers; at least the conclusions drawn may differ.

### **Confirmability**

Lincoln & Guba's (1982) criterion of confirmability refers to the notion of 'objectivity' in quantitative research. In that sense, this dissertation has to document that the findings and conclusions presented are not simply an outcome of my subjectivity but rather are drawn from the empirical material and its analysis. Toward this end, the abovementioned 'audit trail' was communicated as well as this study's field notes and transcripts which can be accessed upon request<sup>5</sup> in order to judge the findings and conclusions laid out in the subsequent chapters. In addition, Guba & Lincoln (1982:248) assert that "one's underlying epistemological assumptions, reasons for formulating the study in a particular way, and implicit assumptions, biases, or prejudices about the context or problem" should be uncovered to establish confirmability, all of which are part of the current chapter.

### **Transferability**

Because this study takes an embedded case-study design of 6 leader-employee relations in their various contexts, generalizability is neither the intended goal nor a feasible quality criterion of this qualitative study. According to Guba & Lincoln's (1982) concept of transferability, it is up to the reader to decide this study's degree

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<sup>5</sup> Due to ethical considerations, research-related records in form of audiotapes, transcripts and field notes were not submitted together with this dissertation.

of transferability, i.e. whether and to what scope this highly contextual study of trusting can be transferred to another specific context. One approach to achieve some degree of transferability is the use of thick descriptions in which both the interactants' behaviors and their contextual situations are presented which may indicate the relevance of the study in some similar yet broader context.

#### **4.5.2 Limitations**

Considering that this study follows a qualitative case study design within the hermeneutic approach, limiting conditions are partly related to the critique of case study designs and qualitative research in general. Thus, as mentioned above, this study's focus has been on a relative small number of embedded cases and their specific contexts which makes generalizability rather impossible. Even though this research did not aim for generalizability, it addressed Guba & Lincoln's (1982) criterion of transferability via the use of thick descriptions and detailed information about the contexts of this study, thereby providing the reader with information and knowledge about the study which may assist in judging this study's applicability in other contexts.

The key limitation, however, can be said to rest on researcher subjectivity which limits all qualitative studies. Therefore, the main concern in qualitative studies such as this one is the researcher's bias, seeing that it influences the underlying assumptions, interests and perceptions brought to the research. In that sense, a central limitation of this study is my potential bias regarding my identification as belonging to an ethnic minority myself.

In order to minimize these limitations, I first took the above measures to ensuring the study's trustworthiness. Second, I tried to limit researcher bias by asking the interactants to comment on my pre-findings as also indicated in the above sections. Thus, possible bias in the analysis of transcripts could be addressed by the interactants thus making me aware of them.

## **5. FINDINGS: CONDITIONS, INTERPRETATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF TRUST IN AND BEYOND ESAG**

With a sample of multicultural leader-employee relations embedded in the context of an ethnic sales department of a Danish SME, the purpose of this longitudinal case study was to discover the leaders' and employees' interpretations and experiences of trusting alongside their perceptions of why and how their trusting changed over time. I argue that a better understanding of the multifaceted intersections of leadership, culture and trust might enhance our understanding of trust as a highly contextual and relational process. In my theoretical discussion (see Chapter 2) I presented and critically discussed academic conceptualizations of trust, culture and leadership as well as theoretical scholarly work concerned with the connection of culture and/or leadership and trust. As an outcome of this discussion, I suggested conceptualizing *trust as a situated relational process* in order to acknowledge the complex interplay of human agency, structuring structures, and the unfolding situation. Hence, the concept of trust put forward in this dissertation rests mainly on the argument that trust is neither solely based on conscious calculations deprived of the influence of the socio-cultural context and structure, nor a predictable outcome of a given structure or a certain practice. The notion of trust put forward in this dissertation is grounded on the understanding that trusting as a situated relational practice is tightly connected with, influenced by and influencing social and organizational actors' daily practices in which, for example, notions of leadership and culture are expressed, produced and reproduced. Hence, I conceptualize *trust as a situated relational process* embedded in the interactions of social actors, relations of agency and structure, and connections of past, present and future.

Therefore, in the following analysis it is vital to explore and describe the construction of *trust as an ongoing situated relational practice* which influences and is affected by the social actors' (tacit) disposition to trust, and their (tacit) perception of the context, situation and relationship they find themselves in, including its range of possible practices. In order to analyze trust as a situated relational process, I explore, describe and analyze the complex and changing relationship between social actors' organizational practices (such as leadership, internal communication, and sales practices) and sociocultural (such as group-belonging, ethnicity, culture, religion, etc.) as well as organizational structures (such as hierarchy, division of power, formal and informal organizational chains of command) as both incorporated and 'objective' structures. All of these influence trusting between leaders and employees within and across their respective subsidiaries and departments as well as beyond the company's boundaries. Using this approach, I identify and explain which contextual (sociocultural), situational (interactional) and relational (relationship related) factors leaders and their employees perceive as enablers, hindrances or critical to trust, as well as how they experienced trust in the past and how they presently understand, evoke and practice trust in their organizational setting. As outlined in Chapter 3, the notions of human agency, structuring structures and specific unfolding relations are highly intertwined and 'happen' in certain contexts or 'fields' with their 'objective' structures, (tacit) logics and power relations, which offer social agents what they perceive to be reasonable and possible practices.

Thus, I start the analysis by describing and investigating the interactants' perception of their organizational context in which the respective leader-employee relations are embedded. In so doing I provide accounts of the organizational members' roles and positions in regard to their respective organizational units as well as their understanding of the company's overall structure and logics and, thus, their conception of what constitutes 'reasonable and possible practices' in the given organizational context. This implies that I investigate the interactants' organizational 'reality' as presented to me by ESAG HQ, and as referred to by this study's interactants and observed by me.

In the course of analyzing the interactants' understanding and perception of themselves and their relations to the others as members of a certain organizational 'reality', I furthermore explain to what extent and how the interactants understand the relationship between their position (and the positioning of others) at ESAG and both their and the others' perceived sociocultural and educational backgrounds. This means that I examine practices of positioning in the field of *ESAG* which influence and are influenced by certain power relations as they provide access to certain positions and sub-fields.

As mentioned above and outlined in Chapter 3, trusting as a situated relational process is not only influenced by a given organizational context and an unfolding relationship, but also by the interactants' dispositions and 'sociocultural frames'; these tacitly influence justifications for trust as they effect the interactants' experience of familiarity as well as their agency. Therefore, I examine how past experiences of trust (and leadership) made by the interactants in this study influence their current interpretation and experiences of trust in their respective leader-employee relationships in particular and other organizational interactions in general.

The abovementioned sections of analysis, thus, address the conditions for trust, the interactants' interpretations of trust, and both their former and current experiences of trust and leadership in their respective leader-employee relations. As mentioned above, and outlined in Chapters 3 and 4, the order of the analytical steps is inspired by Bourdieu's approach to field analysis. Although this ordering lends the analysis a certain structure and transparency, I highlight that the aforementioned 'analytical aspects' of trust, i.e. the conditions, the unfolding situation and the interactants' agency, are highly intertwined. Consequently, while the structure of this analysis chapter is influenced by these three aspects, the analysis nevertheless aims to explore and explain the interdependencies between them. Therefore, the following analysis is characterized by references that span the key findings since trust as a situated relational practice cannot be understood by analyzing the conditions, the unfolding situation and the interactants' agency in isolation from each other. Following the overall hermeneutical approach outlined in Chapter 4, four



interrelated key findings emerged from observation of six leader-employee relations and their narratives in semi-structured interviews, two focus group-like feedback sessions and hours of informal conversations over the course of 2.5 years. These findings are:

- **Finding 1: Diverse understandings and recognitions of ESAG's inherent cultural complexity present diverse and changing conditions for trust.**
- **Finding 2: Struggles over 'reasonable' practices can enhance familiarity and foster trust.**
- **Finding 3: Embodied experiences and mutual identification can enable trust: the possible strengths of fragmented leadership styles.**
- **Finding 4: Continued misalignment of logics and cultural othering present major barriers for trust.**

What follows is a presentation and analysis of these findings in order given above which corresponds with the order of the research questions laid out in Chapter 1: Findings 1 and 2 mainly address the analytical aspect of 'conditions for trust' and thus primarily provide answers to research question 1; Finding 3 and 4 address mainly the aspects of 'the unfolding situation' and 'the interactants' agency' and provides answers to research questions 2 and 3 since they address all three analytical aspects of trust as a situated relational practice. As mentioned earlier, while the suggested structure may imply that the three analytical aspects of trust can be viewed in isolation, I will describe and explain their interconnectedness throughout the following presentation and analysis of the findings.

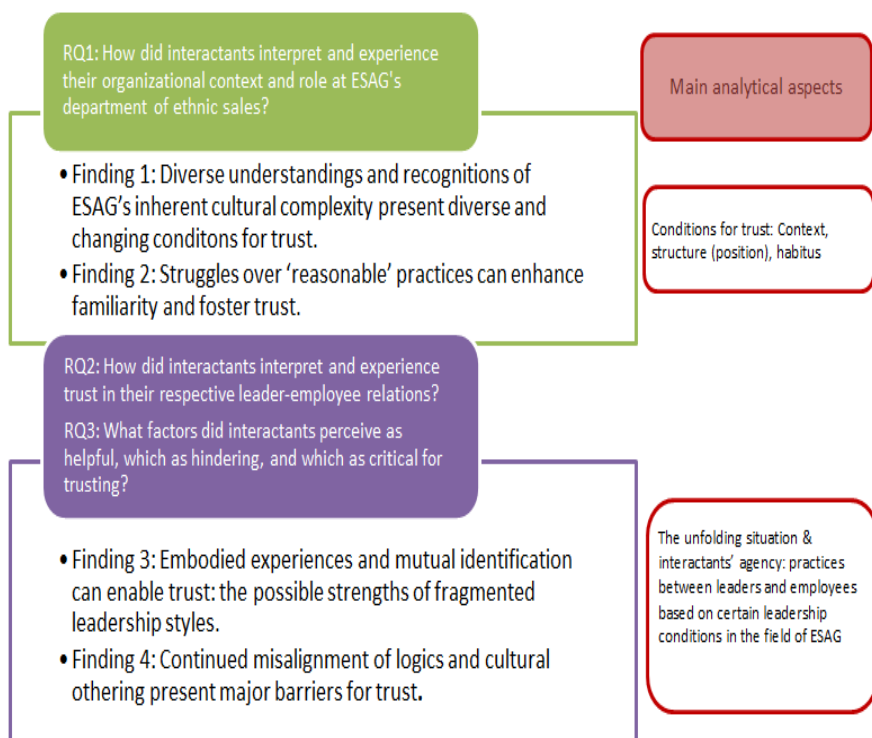


Figure 8: Structure of Analysis: The connection between Findings, RQs and analytical aspects

In order to better understand the reality of the interactants, I draw on tools of “thick description” (Denzin 2001) to present a comprehensive array of experiences made by this study’s interactants. By employing clarifying quotations from interview transcripts and field notes, I aim to let the interactants’ voices be heard and thus present the richness and complexity of the research phenomenon.

To ensure interactant confidentiality, I concealed names by abbreviations consisting of the letter “I”, which stands for ‘interactant’, followed by the ISO 2 code for each interactant’s national identification (e.g. DK, TR) and a number. As mentioned in Chapter 4, this study focuses on six leader-employee relations (IDK1-ITR1; IDK1-

ITR2; IDK2-ITR5; IDK3-ITR4; IDK4-IDK3; all indicated by a solid red arrow in the figure below), yet also draws on interviews, informal conversations and observations of employees and leaders of ESAG's three sales subsidiaries and its HQ. The analysis thus rests on empirical material assembled from 22 interactants who were located as follows in ESAG's department of ethnic sales:

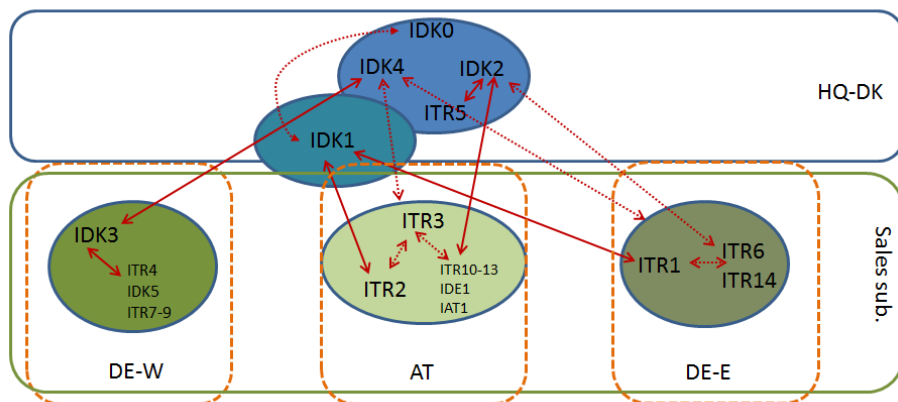


Figure: 9: Overview on the six embedded leader-employee relations (solid red lines) in the department of Ethnic Sales at HQs and its three subsidiaries (DE-W, AT, DE-E)

## 5.1 Diverse and changing conditions for trust: Perceptions of ESAG's cultural complexity against the backdrop of a desire for unity

Even though over time we have learned how to collaborate across cultures, it's still different when you suddenly have them as colleagues; then you have to change your mode of thinking thus: they are now a part of our organization. (Interview IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:04:15.3-0:05:50.2)

ESAG was founded in the early 1980's in Denmark. Initially, they only had one customer in the Middle East, but the company expanded its sales areas to include Western Europe and the Balkans, which resulted in a growing workforce at HQ. Due to a primary focus on sales activities in foreign markets, many ESAG employees within the sales departments have become familiar with "collaborating across cultures", as expressed by IDK1 in the quote above. In order to become a key business player on the European food market, especially the ethnic food market, ESAG saw the need to establish operations outside Denmark in those countries deemed to represent desirable markets. Therefore, in 2000 ESAG acquired an Austrian supplier of ethnic food products (AT), including its workforce of primarily Turkish ethnic minority employees. In 2005 and 2013, ESAG established a sales subsidiary in the eastern (DE-E) and western (DE-W) parts of Germany, respectively. In order to fully access the German ethnic food market, ESAG employed ethnic minority Turks at these subsidiaries. Thus, as expressed by IDK1, "suddenly you have them (employees with a Turkish background) as colleagues". In other words, ESAG's cultural make-up became increasingly complex, which IDK1 and others experienced as "not only working across Danish and Turkish cultures, but also across Danish, German or Austrian working cultures translated into Turkish" (Interview IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:05:59.8 - 0:08:06.8).

In this section I present **Finding 1: Diverse understandings and recognitions of ESAG's inherent cultural complexity present diverse and changing conditions for trust**. As outlined in Chapter 4 and presented in figure 9 (figure above), ESAG's department of ethnic sales comprises a section at HQ in Denmark and three subsidiaries outside Denmark, whereby one is in Austria (AT) and two are in Germany (DE-W and DE-E), the latter representing ESAG's main market for its ethnic food products. In order to enhance its competitiveness on the ethnic market, ESAG's top management decided to hire ethnic minority Turks for its sales subsidiaries in Austria and Germany, as mentioned above. It seems that this decision was understood to be indispensable as an overwhelming number of this study's interactants indicated that any company on the ethnic market would need employees

of Turkish origin who had a specific understanding of this particular market and the ability to deal with potential Turkish customers to enhance its competitiveness. Both a leader from HQ who worked directly within the field of ethnic sales and the sales personnel of Turkish origin highlighted this point:

I think it [having Turkish employees] is the key ingredient. And it has been a long process because we initially had the philosophy that we could sell our products ourselves since we knew them best. [Yes] and to some extent that's correct. But if you really want to succeed, then you have to have somebody who understands the language and understands the culture. Understands the food culture, understands how our products are used [yes, yes] somebody to whom these things have become second nature, and thus employing Turks seemed obvious to us. (Interview IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:04:15.3 - 0:05:50.2)

Apparently, ESAG's business success seems to rest largely on its ethnic minority Turkish employees' *incorporated cultural capital* and their ability to draw on it, i.e. to practice "these things that have become second nature to them", as indicated in the quote above. Following that thought, IDK1 seems to indicate that the logics of the ethnic food market differ from other food markets as speaking the minority language seemed to be important and valued. In addition, employing ethnic minority Turks not only seems to ease the access to the desired market segments but also enhances customer satisfaction.

Speaking Turkish is something our customers demand even though they speak German well. That doesn't play a role, they prefer to be addressed in Turkish and I understand that. We are a Turkish business and have Turkish products. Well, why is it that we sell our product line under a Turkish name even though we are a Danish company? Well, it's the market that demands it, so why not? (Interview ITR1; June 2013; time stamp 0:25:33.8 - 0:26:27.0)

In this quote, ITR1 furthermore points out that ESAG's success is partly based on selling its products via a Turkish sounding brand name. Arguably, ESAG's practices of employing sales personnel with Turkish backgrounds, using the Turkish language in sales situations, including marketing material and TV spots on Turkish channels, and adopting a Turkish brand name enables ESAG to appear Turkish. Not surprisingly, many of this study's ethnic Turkish interactants thought that ESAG's products were of Turkish origin before they joined the company and discovered otherwise. It seems that ESAG not only utilized (Bratton & Gold 2007) its ethnic Turkish workforce to get access to the European ethnic markets but they also drew on Turkish identity in order to position itself on the field of *Ethnic Business* (Kontos 2007) which is dominated by companies owned by ethnic minorities.

Besides having an important influence on customer satisfaction and market access, ITR2 pointed out that he is a vital part of the customer network as he is an incorporated part of each customer's reputation, which is extremely important to the customers (Informal conversation ITR2; September 2014; time stamp: 0:06:48.5-0:15:48.8), as they are connected in a more or less tight yet extended family network:

When you see them, you think they could be siblings. They are related to each other but they are also each other's strongest and hardest competitors. That is also an advantage to ESAG because when you make one of them buy a certain product then the others want it too. (Field notes sales meeting at AT; September 2013; page 10)

Thus, it seems that ESAG's employees of Turkish origin hold key positions in terms of ensuring ESAG's success on the ethnic food market. Therefore, I argue that ESAG's entire department of ethnic sales is dependent on these employees; hence, they seem to hold a rather powerful position at ESAG, despite them being 'ordinary sales persons'. I present this assumption in greater detail in the course of this analysis.

Although it employs ethnic minority Turks at its sales subsidiaries, ESAG's workforce at the Danish HQ is predominantly ethnic Danish. In addition, within the department of ethnic sales, but also throughout the entire company, all leadership positions are held by ethnic Danes with the exception of the subsidiary leader in Austria, who belongs to the Austrian Turkish ethnic minority. The Austro-Turkish subsidiary leader (ITR3) is, furthermore, one of the very few female leaders in the entire ESAG group; the other is IDK2, stationed at HQ. As indicated in figure 9, almost all leaders of Danish origin are based at HQ, with IDK1 functioning as the primary intermediary leader who visits the subsidiaries in Austria (AT) and the eastern part of Germany (DE-E) for several days about twice a month. IDK3, the leader of the sales subsidiary in the western part of Germany (DE-W), however, works as an expatriate in Germany where he is responsible for establishing and running DE-W.

This short description of ESAG's department of ethnic sales suggests that it is divided into an overall ethnic Danish workforce at HQ, with about 250 employees in total, and an overall ethnic Turkish workforce of about 20 employees at the sales subsidiaries. The HQ workforce appears to hold a greater share of the power since they represent about 90 % of the entire workforce of the ESAG group and, in addition, hold the vast majority of leadership positions. The subsidiary workforce, on the other hand, consists mainly of sales and warehouse personnel, some of whom have no educational qualifications as sales persons. Furthermore, some personnel, especially those working at the warehouse in Austria, have difficulties speaking their official host-country language (Interview IDE1, December 2014; time stamp: 0:13:33.8-0:19:34.2). The analysis of the empirical material also revealed a number of less obvious differences between the HQ and subsidiary personnel as well as possible explanations for why the HQ personnel in particular assumed that ESAG was a 'rather homogeneous community or family which works according to the same values'.

### 5.1.1 A family business with family values

An overwhelming number of this study's interactants presented ESAG as a family business and many of the leaders I interacted with had been with ESAG for well over 15 years and had actively helped make the company what it is today: A successful production and retail company in the ethnic food markets of Europe and beyond. Being a family business with family values seemed on one hand to mean that key managerial positions at ESAG were taken by family members or close acquaintances of ESAG's founder and current CEO (Field notes/interview summary IDK4 December 2012). On the other hand, being a family business is portrayed as following so-called family values, as IDK4 pointed out:

Actually, we are a family; we have family values. And that is true as well for some of the cultures we work with: Turks, and especially people from the Middle East. We have these family values: respect and collaboration ... relationships. [Interview IDK4; December 2012: time stamp: 0:36:46.0 – 0:37:05.2]

In this quote, IDK4 mentions the values of *respect, cooperation and relation building* as being important family values. He also indicates that these are the values of those cultures ESAG cooperates with, i.e. persons and companies from Turkish and Middle Eastern cultures. Thus, ESAG, which understands itself to be a 'Danish company', holds values which, arguably, are also important in 'Turkish culture', as expressed by IDK4. Thus, *embracing and working according to family values* seems to be presented as an important aspect which HQ and subsidiary personnel presumably have in common. This notion was supported by many employees of Turkish ethnicity. For example, ITR13, employed at AT, mentioned that leaders or employees from HQ would normally ask her about her family and her own well-being before engaging in business discussions (Interview ITR13, May 2013; time stamp: 0:12:53.1-0:13:51.5). The same behavior was experienced by ITR6, employed at DE-E, who pointed out that Danes were far more family-oriented than,



for example, Germans and that she had been invited to visit her leader's home during her first visit to Denmark. She noticed that the entire HQ displayed family values (Interview ITR6, June 2014; time stamp: 0:21:52.3 - 0:23:03.8). ITR8, employed at DE-W, highlighted similar experiences and even mentioned that IDK4 and IDK1 were not only her superiors but also her "friends" (Interview ITR8, April 2014; time stamp: 0:14:50.6-0:16:09.3). Therefore, what IDK4 called family values could not only be a type of 'glue' keeping all employees together, but could also function as guiding principles for all employees at ESAG, no matter where they may be stationed. IDK4 provided an example of the strengths of knowing and living these values when he spoke of his time as an expatriate in an Arabic country:

I am safe because I know the values, and these are values I am convinced of, and it is a huge value-community: Well, what would [name of CEO] have done in this situation? He would have acted in such a manner. So, I also dare to act like that [Yes]. And it is these values which are a basic part of our leadership, and there are strong values in owner-led companies such as this one. [That's right]. (Interview IDK4; June 2014: time stamp: 2:56:19.9-3:00:30.1)

IDK4 pointed out that knowing, or rather *living*, the company's values gave him a feeling of safety; he dared to take actions before having to ask a superior for advice. The company backed his decisions to quite some extent. In other words, he did not run a high risk when taking certain actions; he was allowed, but not expected, to fail and he had the feeling that he could trust the company to stand behind him. IDK4's statement arguably refers to the notion of "Freedom with Responsibility", a concept, or even 'philosophy', often mentioned in Danish companies (Lotz & Olsen 2005). The same impression was given by IDK1 (Interview IDK1; June 2013: time stamp: 0:55:11.3 - 0:57:49.4) and ITR1 (Interview ITR1 June 2013: time stamp: 0:32:25.1 – 0:33:37.1). Thus, knowing the values and living the values may have provided a sense of security and familiarity within the company. The company culture thus arguably represented a form of security net for employees' actions. In addition, it

could be argued that the values are part of the tacit ‘rules of the game’ and thus, represent the company’s “collective unconscious”, i.e. the “habitus of the field” (Kenway & McLeod 2004:529, cited and referred to in Özbilgin & Tatli 2005:859) of *ESAG*.

### **5.1.2 Not that homogenous after all: Indications of cultural and structural differences**

While the above quotes and references propose that employees across *ESAG*’s diverse units understood themselves as belonging to *ESAG*’s family business and thus, to some extent, identified with the company and its family values, I argue that this understanding does not necessarily lead to an exclusive identification with *ESAG*; neither does it indicate that *ESAG*’s employees make up a homogeneous workgroup. Nevertheless, the analysis of my field notes and interview material suggests that especially leaders from HQ who only seldom visited or engaged in face-to-face communication with *ESAG*’s subsidiary workforce seemed to perceive *ESAG* as one overly homogeneous unit. During my field work I learnt about a variety of incidents which may support this assumption. For example, even though *IDK4* was aware of the fact that the subsidiary workforce was primarily of Turkish origin, he decided to administer the annual personal development meetings/appraisal interviews (*MUS samtale*) in the same manner as he would at HQ with its predominantly Danish workforce. However, he needed to realize that the Danish version of development meetings could not be applied at the subsidiaries since the ethnic minority Turks did not perceive it in the same way as the Danish workforce at HQ. According to *IDK4*, he wondered whether the employees of Turkish origin would dare to criticize their superiors, a process understood to be a vital part of the so-called *MUS* interviews. He mentioned that the Turkish understanding of hierarchy and their ‘power-difference’ might hinder them in critically and truthfully reporting their work situation and their desire for improvement (Interview *IDK4*, December 2012: time stamp: 0:07:51–0:10:07). Hence, these meetings had to be

adjusted in order for them to make sense to an ethnic minority Turkish workforce (Summary/Interview ITR3, May 2013; time stamp 2:03:27.9-2:22:06.7; page 11f). Whereas IDK4 seemed to be convinced of culture being the decisive factor for the ethnic Turks having a different understanding of the development interviews compared to the ethnic Danes, I argue that the wider contextual circumstances probably also had an influence. As the unemployment rate of ethnic minorities greatly exceeds that of ethnic majorities (Kahanec et al. (2010)), it seems rather irrational for employees to challenge their superior while under the impression that this very practice could potentially jeopardize their job. It could be argued that from an ethnic minority perspective, being employed in a well-functioning company and receiving a decent wage represents financial security that should not be jeopardized by indicating discontent with a superior's leadership style. From the perspective of ESAG's ethnic minority Turkish workforce, doing just that does not present itself as a reasonable practice. As expressed by ITR10, it is preferable to be modest and not openly judgmental because being a foreigner means having to occasionally cope with prejudice which can be extremely distressing. Therefore, an individual learns to not treat others as stereotypes, but rather perceives the other as a human being instead of as somebody representing a certain culture (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:13:02.9-0:13:36.1).

Following this line of thought, it could be argued that the majority of ESAG's ethnic Turkish sales personnel prefer not to criticize their work conditions and/or their leaders because of the power structure at ESAG *and* the wider societal field they find themselves in, even though this coincides with cultural differences. ESAG's main job criterion for its sales personnel is having a Turkish background, which is arguably met by almost all ethnic Turks of employable age. Thus, it is conceivable that many of the ethnic minority Turks assume that ESAG would have no problems finding a substitute for them should ESAG's management perceive them as too demanding or too difficult to work with. Therefore, many ethnic Turks are unlikely to complain about their work situation at ESAG. In other words, due to the unemployment structure in Austria and Germany, and ESAG's rather unspecified requirements for sales vacancies, ESAG HQ with its predominantly ethnic majority

Danish workforce appears to hold a rather powerful position. As hinted at above, the differences in power coincide with the cultural or ethnic differences within ESAG's entire workforce. However, even though ESAG HQ represents the most powerful unit at ESAG and almost all leadership positions are taken by ethnic Danish HQ employees, this does not mean that the ethnic Turkish minority workforce should be considered powerless. As the ethnic Turkish sales personnel paved the way and broadened ESAG's access to the ethnic market due to their ethnic background, their knowledge of the market and their vast social network, they probably played a decisive role in ESAG's success. However, few of them seem to be aware of this rather powerful position. This may be related to ESAG HQ's focus on the sales persons' *embodied cultural capital* and their understanding of the Turkish (food) culture, which, as argued earlier, does not seem to represent a scarce or unique resource in light of the large pool of unemployed ethnic minority Turks. However, in addition to their embodied cultural capital, their *institutionalized cultural capital* and *social capital* arguably also empower them. The fact that ESAG invests time, effort and money in its employees in order to educate them regarding company practices and using the firm's infrastructure suggests that ESAG estimates it to be too costly to replace difficult employees. More crucial, however, may be the ethnic Turkish minority employees' *social capital* in form of their memberships in extensive networks. For example, all sales persons indicated that they maintain fairly close contact with their customers, who are connected with each other in a type of social network. Hence, by knowing one customer, the ethnic Turkish sales persons gain access to this customer's network. Therefore, it could be argued that the sales people's social capital significantly enlarges ESAG's potential customer group and thus may play an important role in extending ESAG's market share. In addition, because the sales persons tend to be immersed in the customer network, and the group of ethnic Turks in general, the entire network would probably notice if 'one of them' were to lose his or her job. As mentioned by ITR2, his customers' reputation included him being their supplier (Informal conversation ITR2; September 2014; time stamp: 0:06:48.5-0:15:48.8), which could indicate that ESAG's perceived image could be damaged should an ethnic Turkish employee who

is perceived as an essential asset of the customer group's network be laid off. However, few of ESAG's ethnic Turkish employees seemed to be aware of the powerful role their *social capital* lent them. This may be the reason why most of them did not directly challenge HQ's preferred approaches to ethnic sales, but rather expressed their discontent to their direct superiors (ITR3; IDK3; IDK1) who, with the exception of IDK1, were stationed outside HQ and thus may have been better able to relate to their situation. Nevertheless, as I will present in the following chapter, a few ethnic Turks did challenge the leaders at HQ directly and thus arguably made HQ realize that ESAG did not comprise one overall homogeneous workforce. In general, however, the overwhelming majority of ESAG's workforce appeared to unconsciously exclude ESAG's subsidiary employees from their awareness, and thus understood ESAG to be the same as ESAG HQ; consequently, they probably thought of the company in terms of a homogeneous group, which may have caused them to use the same approaches and practices across its entire workforce.

In addition to the above-mentioned idea of using the same HR tools throughout the company, IDK4 employed the same approach towards employee development when he initiated a sales course for all sales personnel in ESAG's department of ethnic sales. Yet, as was the case with previous development interviews, the ethnic minority Turkish sales personnel struggled with the content of the sales course and how it was delivered. In a similar way, IDK2, the leader of sales support at HQ, also appeared to expect all employees to work in line with HQ logic. For instance, she expected all subsidiaries to wholeheartedly embrace the installation and usage of Axapta, a resource planning software. However, she experienced resistance from the Austrian subsidiary which she was unable to make sense of (Interview IDK2, April 2013; time stamp: 0:24:16.2 - 0:24:54.6). On the other hand, IDE1 and IAT1 explained that they needed an adapted version of the software at AT as they utilized an entirely different work practice and had to follow certain Austrian regulations (Interview IDE1, May 2013; time stamp: 0:13:32.2 - 0:14:28.4; Interview IAT1, May 2013; time stamp: 0:04:28.7-0:07:09.3). Based on these and other examples, which I will present in the following section, I suggest that even though an

overwhelming amount of this study's interactants identified with ESAG as a whole, they also –often predominantly - identified with their respective units which according to the head of sales (IDK0) had to be understood as independent entities. In fact, regarding a sense of belonging and familiarity, which is probably based on shared values, this study's empirical material suggests that there was a much stronger sense of unity *within* each of ESAG's geographical entities than *across* these entities. The strong sense of community and familiarity at ESAG's diverse entities was expressed through the interactants' behavior at work, especially their methods of collaboration and communication. For instance, at all four sites (HQ, AT, DE-E, and DE-W) the employees engaged in a variety of informal and almost private conversations which often included stories about their families, weekend endeavors and plans for vacations. At DE-E and AT, private conversations moreover revolved around religious practices and rites, such as circumcision, Ramadan or festivities related to Turkish weddings. The working atmosphere was friendly and even though at times the interactants seemed to be under time pressure, I perceived the overall atmosphere at the offices and warehouses as relaxed. This was probably due to the fact that periods of focused work were interrupted by periods of good humor and laughter. Due to the similar architectural office design in the department of ethnic sales, both at the subsidiaries and HQ, all employees and their leaders were able to exchange eye contact during working hours and all could listen to each other's telephone conversations with customers or family members. According to interactants at AT, DE-W and HQ, being able to hear the others was indicated as being essential to their work in terms of knowledge sharing and the ability to help each other (Observation at HQ, April 2014 and January 2015; Observation at DE-W, April 2014), which ITR3, the subsidiary leader of AT, explained thus:

As I told you, we have 10 people here and we communicate all the time with each other. We know all about each other right down to our personal lives; what our kids are doing at school and so on. And at our place, problems are discussed and solved right away, be it personal or business related problems. Otherwise you cannot continue your work. And, you see, if somebody is sad

or sick then you simply have to act. (Interview ITR3; May 2013; time stamp: 2:03:27.9-2:22:06.7)

Helping each other, knowing about each other, and sharing information with each other, including personal information, seemed to heighten the sense of community among the workforce at HQ and the subsidiaries. The most essential factor for enhancing this sense of community seemed to be the mode, frequency and quality of communication. Among the workforce at ESAG's subsidiaries and HQ, employees and leaders interacted openly and were friendly with each other. They spent much of their working time together and followed an 'open-door policy' (e.g. Field notes AT, September 2013; Field notes HQ, April 2014). In the cases of AT and DE-W, in particular, they often engaged in joint after-work activities such as visiting each other, eating out or partying together (Field notes DE-W, May 2014). All these activities fostered a group-feeling and enhanced, or at least maintained, a feeling of belonging to a certain subsidiary or organizational entity. Not only did these employees come to know each other very well, but in doing so they also seemed to identify with each other for a variety of reasons:

- a) They shared similar histories: Most of the ethnic minority Turks had grown up in the host-country but still lived in predominantly Turkish communities. Almost all employees at HQ – representing about 90% of ESAG's entire workforce - seemed to be familiar with each other due to their similar background. Almost all of them had grown up in the same region and all seemed to share similar interests and an educational background that was related to the business sector in some respect.
- b) They shared joint embodied experiences: Employees and leaders at DE-W, DE-E and AT, for instance, jointly developed their respective subsidiaries. The same can be said for employees with longer tenure at ESAG's department of ethnic sales at HQ.
- c) They shared or created common goals: Employees at DE-W, for example, worked towards the goal of being recognized as the sales subsidiary with the highest economic growth rate in ESAG. In addition, employees at DE-

W and AT were extremely loyal towards each other while sharing a somewhat reserved attitude towards HQ, which was articulated in a number of similar expressions.

- d) They committed to mutually shared values: For instance, the employees and leaders at AT and DE-E shared a common understanding of a high level of control and its importance in delivering on time, reducing and learning from mistakes, and maintaining or enhancing ESAG's reputation.

As outlined in Chapter 2, the above mentioned practices and processes seem to be in line with Lewicki & Bunker's (1996) suggestions of practices that strengthen identification-based trust or lead to what Child (1998) called 'bonding'. Thus, shared experiences, values and goals have the ability to result in common identification and a strong feeling of familiarity, which in turn can present a favorable backdrop for trust (see e.g. Luhmann 1979, Möllering 2006, Lewicki & Bunker 1996, Frederiksen 2014). These shared experiences, however, seem predominantly to be made while being emerged in the same field; thus, it could be questioned if internal communication of goals and values would have a similar influence on 'bonding' as abovementioned shared embodied experiences.

In summary, on the one hand this study's interactants indicated feelings of belonging to ESAG as a whole, yet on the other hand they also indicated that they identified with other cultural groupings. Following Sackmann's (1997:33f) conceptualization of cultural groups and remaining in ESAG's understanding of being a family business, it could be argued that the study's interactants belonged to and identified with a variety of 'families' which represented sub-groups of ESAG (subsidiary culture), transorganizational groups (professional culture), and supraorganizational groups (national and regional cultures such as Danish culture and Western and Arabic cultures, or religion). Sackmann (1997) suggests that any organization can be viewed as comprising a multiplicity of cultures, which is clearly the case with ESAG. However, in the case of ESAG, some of these groupings appear to coincide with each other, leaving the impression that ESAG is predominantly split into two quite different groups: ESAG HQ and ESAG's



subsidiaries, as indicated in figure 9. The similarities of and differences between these two groups seem to follow a variety of aspects, which I will broadly visualize (see section 5.5) after the presentation of the four findings as these inform my view of how ESAG could be presented via an adapted version of Bourdieu's field concept.

The notions of perceived similarities, differences, belonging and identification outlined above are important to consider when explaining trust. As outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, social actors' perceptions and understandings of situations, contexts and practices are always implicitly colored by, for example, their sociocultural, ethnic and educational backgrounds (Bourdieu 1977). In addition, the agents' position within a given field influences their sense of what are *possibles* in light of their *capital portfolio* and the particular field's *doxa*. Therefore, perceptions of what presents *reasonable* actions and/or familiar situations or practices are also influenced by the social actors' backgrounds, positions in a given field, and life trajectories. According to Luhmann (1988) and Frederiksen (2012; 2014), the 'tacit' process of trusting is played out against the backdrop of perceived familiarity because justifications for trust are made in light of a perceived familiarity with the Other, the situation or a certain practice. Hence, experiences of familiarity foster trusting while experiences of perceived senselessness present a critical hurdle for trust.

ESAG's workforce at HQ, representing about 90 % of ESAG's entire workforce, presented a fairly large homogenous unit consisting of a predominantly ethnic Danish workforce whose members had known each other for a fairly long time and who understood their positions, responsibilities and the overall rules of conduct at ESAG (*the logics of practice in the field of ESAG*). This arguably heightened the employees' sense of familiarity towards each other and ESAG in general. The subsidiaries, on the other hand, consisted of a maximum of 25 employees who were predominantly of Turkish heritage. Most of them had not visited HQ and did not know many of the HQ personnel in person (e.g. Interview ITR12, ITR13, IDE1, ITR14, and ITR4); neither did they know how work and leadership was practiced at HQ (e.g. Interview ITR12, ITR3) nor had they been informed that ESAG's overall

structure resembled a matrix structure (Interview ITR3). In general, it seemed that employees from the subsidiaries were rather unfamiliar with a variety of aspects at HQ and vice versa which could be explained by a lack mutual experiences and internal communication. This lack of shared information, it could be said, resulted in a number of struggles which I present in the subsequent section together with a more detailed description of the aforementioned and further issues. The following section additionally describes and analyzes the depicted similarities and differences between HQ and the subsidiaries in more detail, thus unfolding ESAG's cultural complexity in more detail and analyzing its influence on the perception of organizational practices, including trusting.

## **5.2 Struggles over 'reasonable' practices can enhance familiarity and foster trust**

In the past we asked ITR3, ITR2 and ITR6. And if one of them came with a certain input, then the other said: that is wrong. (...) But, actually, from a professional point of view, yes, we need to know what Turkish customers think about a new product and how they experience it from their point of view. Well yes, that's something we can check off the list because we have done that together with our Turkish office. But of course, you [hypothetically referring to one of ESAG's ethnic Turkish employees] have not been heard. Well, that may be bad, but seen from a professional perspective: What is it actually that they can support us with? In fact, we have launched products which are now very successful. If we had listened to them, this would never have happened. "No way, that simply doesn't function". (Head of marketing; Feedback HQ, August 2015: time stamp: 0:57.50.1-0:59.59.7)

In the preceding chapter, I pointed out that ESAG's HQ workforce represented over 90% of ESAG's entire workforce. In addition, as almost all leaders were stationed at HQ it was the main hub for decision making. Based on this and the aforementioned

findings, ESAG HQ was by far the biggest, possibly most powerful, and longest existing unit within the entire ESAG group. Moreover, ESAG HQ had a workforce with a relatively long tenure that understood the tacit company policy and worked according to it and that was not only part of developing ESAG but, crucially, played a proactive role in making ESAG a success. Hence, many of this study's interactants stationed at HQ perceived their working practices to be *the best practices* to ensure ESAG's continual success. Even though I was not explicitly told that ESAG HQ *knew best* how to increase profit margin and market share, for example, it can be inferred from statements such as that above. In that statement, the head of marketing pointed out that in the past they had tried to incorporate the ethnic Turks' opinion of certain products in their product development and marketing approach. However, they came to realize that the ethnic Turks were unable to assist in the marketing process as they seemed to be in conflict over what was right or wrong. Furthermore, past experiences had taught them that certain marketing approaches, which the ethnic Turkish employees had perceived as unfeasible, later proved to be nonetheless very successful. Hence, the head of marketing was under the impression that, from a professional perspective, the ethnic Turkish workforce could not assist him in questions concerning the marketing of ethnic food products. The above statement thus seems to indicate that the ethnic Turkish personnel at the subsidiaries was primarily meant to function in their roles as sales persons and were not to interfere with decision-making at HQ, a process that was to be conducted by professionals with ample experience and the right education, skills and competencies. Nevertheless, some ethnic Turkish employees and other subsidiary employees tried to have a say in decision-making processes that did not concern them 'professionally', as expressed by the head of marketing. For example, ITR3, IDE1, IDK5, ITR7, ITR8, ITR9 and ITR2 expressed the wish to be heard and listened to because they understood themselves to be more knowledgeable and experienced with the ethnic food market than HQ personnel. As I will describe and discuss in detail below, HQ's reluctance to acknowledge these employees' cultural and social capital in their decision making processes at times challenged trust, yet without negatively influencing ESAG's overall economic success.

These perceived interferences, along with a reluctance to take over or accept certain work processes, sometimes led to struggles, such as the unwillingness to conduct development interviews in a certain fashion, as mentioned in Section 5.1. In the following I will analyze some of the struggles which emerged from the collaboration between ESAG HQ personnel in the department of ethnic sales and its sales subsidiaries in more detail. In doing so, I present and analyze the interplay between the organizational members' positions with regard to ESAG and the ethnic market, the tools (types and species of capital) at their disposal, the perceived and communicated organizational culture and code of conduct, and the grounds for trust. Thus, in this section I present **Finding 2: Struggles over 'reasonable' practices can enhance familiarity and foster trust**. Struggles are understood according to Merriam Webster (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/struggle>) as:

- to try very hard to do, achieve, or deal with something that is difficult or that causes problems
- to move with difficulty or with great effort

The struggles presented and analyzed in this chapter, however, did not necessarily lead to incidents of distrust as they were experienced and resolved in different ways, as I will discuss in more detail in Section 5.3. Moreover, some of these emerged because they had been supported by trusting relations in the first place and may have been triggered by having different understandings of the situation at hand.

### **5.2.1 Struggles over sales practices on the ethnic market**

The overruling struggle can be observed in the disagreements and discussions over how to approach and conduct sales practices in the ethnic market in the best possible way. This notion was addressed by an overwhelming majority of the interactants in this study, and the quote at the beginning of this chapter is illustrative. All this study's interactants stated that they had the specific knowledge, skills and experience required to be successful traders in the ethnic market. However, the

overwhelming majority of employees, of both Turkish and Danish ethnicities, expressed that their particular approaches would be the most appropriate to enhance sales in the ethnic market. Thus, the ‘Turkish’ and ‘Danish’ preferred ways of doing business in the ethnic market and their respective approaches to increasing ESAG’s economic profit differed significantly. In combination with the aforementioned overall differences, this at times resulted in misunderstandings or even open struggles over the ‘correct’ and best way of reaching ESAG’s common goal of becoming the biggest and most influential player on the ethnic food market. Hence, while there was agreement regarding the business goal, there seemed to be *quite different understandings of how to reach that goal*. While the head of marketing, the leader of the department of product development and the head of HR embraced a more ‘Westernized’ approach to marketing, solicitation, sales, and employee development, which had shown to function within the Danish context, the majority of sales persons with Turkish backgrounds and a few Danish leaders pointed out that they had difficulties in seeing the appropriateness and suitability of these approaches regarding the ethnic market with its minority ethnic Turkish owned wholesalers, retailers and supermarkets. These different understandings have probably always been part of the collaboration between ESAG HQ and its subsidiaries, as also indicated in the above quote. However, these differences became apparent during the first joint employee development course for the entire sales staff in the department of ethnic sales, including their leaders. During the course, held at a hotel close to the location of DE-W, ITR5 mentioned that: “When I hear you [people from western European countries] talking about Western theories I simply have to laugh because they would not work in the Turkish context” (Summary/Transcript informal conversation ITR2 and ITR5 at sales course, September 2014, page 1). ITR2, another sales person of Turkish origin said: “We do question whether the theories work, we do not trust them” (ibid.). Besides sharing their doubts with me in an informal conversation, they also addressed the perceived mismatch of theory and practice to the entire audience. ITR2, for instance, pointed out:

You cannot make any written ‘contracts’ with Turkish supermarkets since that’s only in paper and pencil. The supermarket owner will do what he sees fit, anyway. The ‘mindset’ of the supermarket has to be changed. You cannot dictate what the owner is to do. The only aspect is that the owner can make more money by selling our products. (ITR2; Field notes sales course, September 2014, page 8)

Arguably, in clearly stating his critical stance towards the proclaimed ‘best sales practices’, ITR2 also revealed that he trusted his leaders not to take advantage of his critical attitude. After all, ITR2 did not know any of the HQ staff besides his own leader, IDK1, and since HQ seemed to be convinced of their hitherto successful business practices, some HQ staff could have perceived ITR2’s statement as ‘deviant behavior’. However, I argue that ITR2 perceived the sales course as an opportunity for knowledge sharing even though it had not been declared as such on the invitation e-mail. As ITR2 had been working within the field of ethnic sales for over 20 years and had thus accumulated a wealth of experience, he was an ideal candidate for sharing his concerns with colleagues. Apparently, ITR2 was not alone with his doubts. His leader, IDK1, who described himself as a sales person and who had also spent over 10 years selling ESAG’s goods in ethnic markets in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and Germany, supported ITR2’s view while simultaneously trying to express the positive aspects of the ongoing sales-course, thus trying to mediate between the approaches preferred by both HQ and the subsidiaries:

The Westernized methods don’t function; we have to be there and always be in contact; and see what works in certain places and then try to use it in other supermarkets as well. So, the ideas and structures have to be there in order to use them right away. (IDK1; Field notes sales course, September 2014, page 9)

Following IDK1’s statement, he himself had experienced the shortcomings of Westernized methods of sales and marketing when employed in the ethnic food market. Seeing that IDK1 held a position as intermediary leader and has had many

years of sales experience in the ethnic market (see section 5.3.1 for further details) he had learned how to adapt to the *logics of doing business* in the ethnic food markets in Europe. Arguably, HQ personnel seemed to be knowledgeable about the ways business was conducted in the ethnic market since they were informed by IDK1, IDK3 and ITR3. Yet, HQ personnel seemed to lack the *practical sense* to anticipate which sales practices would be appropriate and successful in the ethnic food market. IDK1 however had been working for ESAG in the field of ethnic business for more than a decade which is why I assumed that he knew about the differences between the logics of ESAG *and* those in the ethnic food market which made him mediating between them. IDK1's approach to leadership as mainly 'translating HQ policies into reality', as he called it, is described and analyzed in section 5.3.

A similar mediating position was taken by ITR7, who had moved to Germany when he was 14 years old. After high school, he started to study marketing; however, he had to discontinue his studies due to family issues after he had passed the first degree of economics ("Vordiplom in BWL") (Interview ITR7, April 2014; time stamp: 0:00:00.0-0:01:51.4). Therefore, and because he used a substantial amount of business terminology during our conversations, I assumed that he had greater knowledge of business theories commonly taught and used in the Western context compared to the other sales persons of Turkish heritage. On the other hand, he also knew the ethnic market because he had worked in ethnic sales prior to his employment at ESAG. This may be why his statement is quite neutral and I understand it to showcase his knowledge of 'both worlds': the mindset of the ethnic Turkish supermarket owner in light of ESAG's sub-ordinate target of 'having its products displayed in the best possible way'.

The supermarket owner decides how the place is used and not the customer, especially because cooling-systems are expensive. When there is a gap on the shelf, then the issue is that this gap is re-filled with ESAG products. (ITR7; Field notes sales course, Sept. 2014, page 8)

Furthermore, it could be argued that the above statement indicates that ITR7's perception of his role at ESAG is that of a mediator between the preferred Danish and preferred Turkish business practices. During a so-called Monday staff meeting at DE-W, ITR7's statements demonstrated a similar positioning between what could be called 'a Westernized or Americanized and an Eastern or Turkish business mindset'. The main purpose of that particular meeting was to observe the sales personnel's reaction to a TV advertisement. IDK3 told me that he had a negative feeling about it and he needed to hear his sales personnel's opinion. In short, the advertisement's main message was expressed by its 'headline': Not 800 grams but 1 kg! This message was meant to point out that ESAG's main competitor sold 800 grams of a certain product in cans that were slightly smaller than ESAG's cans which, however, contained 1 kg of a similar product. Since the competitor's cans contained only 800 grams, their price was considerably lower than ESAG's 1 kg can. Thus, while the competitor's product seemed to be far cheaper than ESAG's product, this was not actually the case as the kg-price was reasonably similar. In any case, ITR8 and ITR9 were affected by the advertisement and said it would portray ESAG's competitors as "imposters" and they, i.e. ESAG, would "make a fool of themselves" (Field notes, DE-W, April-May 2014; page 3). When asked for his opinion, ITR7 replied: "It's not our job to test our customers' intelligence" (ibid.) which I interpreted to convey his critique in a very subtle way as he did not directly reject the advertisement or frame it as "foolish", but rather pointed out that he did not agree with its aim, which he understood to be 'teaching ESAG's ethnic customer segment', while it instead should aim at enhancing sales. Admittedly, my understanding of ITR7's statement could be wrong; however, in contrast to many of the other sales persons of Turkish origin, I never observed him opposing HQ's understanding and execution of marketing and sales strategies, nor did he challenge any aspects of the aforementioned sales course. While ITR8, the only female course participant besides myself, seemed to be rather content with the course, the other sales persons had a rather negative experience. It seemed that they viewed the sales course itself and its agenda in terms of content and time allotted to the contents a result of 'Westernized thinking' which did not take the 'Turkish perspective' into



account. On the second day of the course, this and other issues emerged and the struggle over the right way of doing business in the ethnic market emerged:

In general, the Westernized view of marketing does not seem to work with the Turkish segment at all as particularly the male sales persons with Turkish backgrounds mentioned that the presented method of product display and the logic connected to it are not applicable for the ethnic market. Nevertheless, the course instructor continues with his slides and I sort of understand his approach since he has no plan B to fall back on. [I wonder if he must have gotten the wrong information from HQ on the level of knowledge gathered here.] (Field notes sales course, Sept. 2014, page 6)

ITR5 wants to know what [name of course instructor] would suggest as a possible answer to yet another assignment. ITR5 continues: “So far, this is just a sum-up of the knowledge of our sales persons’ knowledge.” The instructor replies: “The aim was to heighten the level of sales methods. So, perhaps we started at the wrong level, one that was too low.” IDK4 comments: “This was about knowledge sharing and speaking the same language, so we know what we talk about when we say ‘management of customer complaints’, for example.” ITR2 says: “But we had the wrong expectations. We had a wrong picture about this. And the same is true for [name the course instructor].” IDK4 replies: “This is also about finding the ‘golden nuggets’.” ITR5 turns to all course participants asking: “Did we find the golden nugget?” (Field notes sales course, Sept. 2014, page 10)

Besides giving the impression that HQ’s understanding of a course on sales methods differs from what the sales personnel with Turkish backgrounds expected, the last quote also indicates that HQ personnel had a different and perhaps somewhat incomplete knowledge of ESAG’s employees of Turkish origin in terms of their competencies and understanding of sales and marketing practices and the *logics of the ethnic food market* in general as hinted at earlier. Yet, by listing and discussing the diverse understandings of what comprises reasonable actions on the ethnic

market in terms of sales and marketing practices, the course members had the opportunity to learn from each other. Furthermore, seeing that many of the course members had never met each other before, this course provided the first opportunity to become acquainted on a personal basis. Both of these aspects were highlighted as being the main outcome of the course (Field notes sales course, Sept. 2014). Thus, it could be argued that the course members became more familiar with each other and the others' approaches to sales and marketing at their respective locations. In fact, several course members discussed the feasibility of DE-E's approach at their respective locations (Field notes sales course, Sept. 2014; pages 8f). The Danish leaders furthermore achieved an impression of the local ethnic market because the course instructor planned assignments on product placement which had to be worked on while in the field; thus all course members visited two supermarkets that belonged to DE-W's customer group. Spending two days together in discussion arguably enhanced their knowledge of each other, which may have improved the grounds for trusting each other. Yet, considering that HQ personnel did not *experience* sales practices in the German or Austrian ethnic food market, they would probably have difficulties grasping the *logics* of this particular *field of ethnic business* and thus might not understand the ethnic Turkish employees' challenges in transferring HQ practices to what would resemble *reasonable practices* in their respective ethnic markets.

On the other hand, the perceived differences between the ESAG HQ's and the subsidiaries' understanding of what the sales course should have addressed and what it actually addressed could be regarded as problematic for a variety of reasons. Firstly, HQ's leaders could be perceived as uninterested in the sales personnel of Turkish origin as long as they reach the agreed volume of sales. Arguably, this assumption was substantiated by the subsidiary employees' mentioning of a lack of communication between them and HQ. IDE1, for instance, expressed this lack of communication along the lines of "not being listened to and thus not being taken seriously" (Interview IDE1, May 2013; time stamp: 0:04:48.2 - 0:05:21.0). Furthermore, ITR4 stressed that the lack of communication combined with a lack of

face-to-face contact resulted in “the leaders from HQ not knowing the first thing about what really goes on down here, and how hard we try to sustain this location”, which he then related to trust: “How can I trust them?” (Interview with ITR4 and IDK3; September 2014; time stamp: 0:08:15.9-0:09:50.0). While HQ personnel did not appear to know about how the subsidiaries perceived and understood the existing gap in communication, including that it might cause cynicism and distrust, they were, however, aware of its existence. The head of accountancy, for example, pointed out that “we are not good at dialogue which would help to get their [the subsidiaries] side of the story” (Interview head of accountancy; January 2013; time stamp: 24:48 – 25.27.7) and IDK0 told me that “HQ-subsidiary communication could be much better if we simply integrated it into our strategy, and I think that would bring our subsidiaries much closer to us” (Interview IDK0; September 2014; time stamp: 0:13:02.3 – 0:14.30.3). IDK4 expressed a similar notion when pointing out that ESAG’s internal communication worked very well at HQ, with every employee being informed about the company’s actions and status. However, this was not the case in the subsidiaries and he claimed that: “We are not good at communicating” (Interview IDK4; December 2012; time stamp: 1:08:57). The above statements about ESAG’s internal communication, on the one hand, indicate that HQ seemed to be aware of the importance of communication for enhancing a sense of belonging and thus, further integrating the subsidiaries into the ESAG group. In addition, enhanced internal communication is portrayed as a means of information sharing, which arguably would foster a shared understanding of the company’s *objective structures of the given field, including its genuine rules and resources*. Yet, as hinted at earlier, enhanced internal communication alone would probably not improve the organizational members’ understanding of each other’s *situated activities (practical sense)* and *subjective experiences (habitus and reflexive agency)*.

The lack of communication may have been one reason for the above mentioned sales course turning out not to fit the course members’ expectations, i.e. their *practical sense*. Furthermore, I argue that offering a sales course that appeared to

address rather basic sales techniques may have expressed HQ's overall assumption that ESAG's ethnic Turkish personnel were 'rather uneducated'. Since ESAG's HR department, i.e. IDK4, was theoretically responsible for hiring all sales personnel and thus evaluating whether their skill set and competencies would fit the vacant position, it could be assumed that he should have known about the sales personnel's level of knowledge (*cultural capital*). However, during my field work I learned that ESAG did not require any particular skill set of its sales personnel of Turkish origin besides "speaking Turkish" (Interview IDK4; December 2012; time stamp 25:01–26:58). Nevertheless, many ethnic Turkish sales persons pointed out that they had had some form of sales experience from other companies prior to their employment at ESAG. Hence, I assumed that IDK4 must have known about the sales personnel's prior experience, at least to some extent. In any case, the abovementioned struggles over the 'best sales and marketing practices' appeared to reveal further 'struggles' related to notions of not being 'correctly' recognized or taken seriously, which in turn had implications for trust as I will discuss in detail in the subsequent sections.

### **5.2.2 Struggles over balancing the influence of family, friendship and business on sales practices and internal collaboration**

In line with the above quotes, which indicate that Westernized marketing strategies would not make much sense to Turkish-run supermarkets and wholesalers, all sales persons of Turkish origin and a few leaders of Danish origin pointed out that a close, almost family-like contact with their customers is an important aspect to consider when intending to heighten ESAG's impact on the ethnic market. ITR8 mentioned: "In Germany you start with doing business and at Turkish places you have to start with the personal things. And mentioning Denmark is not a good idea; it's better to leave that out. But, of course, you have to mention our brand" (ITR8; Field notes sales course, Sept. 2014, page 5). Concerning the distribution of personal talk and business talk, a Danish leader stated that: "The important point is that you have a lot

of conversation with the customer about anything, and then you talk about the sales for 10 minutes” (IDK1). Talking about personal issues during sales work may seem a waste of time from a HQ perspective considering its focus on efficiency which is described and analyzed in the subsequent section. Efficiency, for example, seems to refer to closing business deals within minutes, which IDK1, based on his prolonged experiences made in the ethnic market, explained as rather inappropriate expectation of many Danish businessmen:

I remember reading in a newspaper once, shortly after the fall of the Berlin wall, of how Danish businessmen went to Poland to conquer the Polish market. And the Danish approach was: Take a flight to Warszawa and on the way to the potential customer, you make a business plan on the back of an old newspaper. But the Pole is not like that, they take business seriously. They have a right to be taken seriously and to be presented with a well thought-through business plan. (...) I think, in general, Danes have spent many years not paying attention to cultural differences and to human interaction, which you have to get a feel for. (IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:39:05.6 - 0:43:45.0)

In his position as intermediary leader at ESAG’s department of ethnic sales, it seems that IDK1 learned to “get a feel for human interaction”, as he put it, which I will describe in detail in Section 5.3. Furthermore, while being responsible for developing DE-E and functioning as ITR1’s and ITR2’s leader, he seemed to realize that personal contact was decisive in building trust with his employees – which I will discuss in detail in Section 5.3 – but also in closing a good deal and building long lasting relations with the ethnic minority Turkish retailers and supermarket owners. In that sense, it could be argued that not only IDK1 but also ESAG HQ in general realized that cultural backgrounds affected business practices and thus had to be taken into consideration. Apparently, they realized this because they ran into problems which they had not anticipated from their Danish perspective. Without

going into too much detail, I shall mention two issues that shed some light on the darker side of the ethnic market. During an informal conversation, ITR2 told me that he had had to collect some money from a customer whose payments were overdue and who then turned angry:

“He really got angry; you could see it in his eyes. You know, we Turks can have a very intense gaze.” ITR2 leaned forward in his chair and looked me intensely in the eyes. He continued while IDK1 and I listened carefully: “His eyes just turned very dark and then he grabbed my shoulders and maneuvered me over to his car, opened the backdoors and shoved me into the back seat. His brother took the front passenger seat and off we drove. He drove like a maniac through the city, all the while shouting and expressing his anger. I really started praying like: If I make it out here alive, I will become a better person. Well, at some point we stopped in front of a city house. He went up to his flat where he pointed to a gym bag in a corner of his living room. It was filled with cash. He said: Take it and leave me alone. I grabbed the bag and left the flat. I was happy to be alive. So, we got our money.” ITR2 smiled and made himself comfortable in his easy chair. I looked at him and, somewhat dazed, remarked: “You are kidding me, right? IDK1, he is kidding me, this is not true is it?” “Yes, it is”, IDK1 answered and continued: “I did tell you about the incident with the customer who had been shot in his office and we found him there sitting in his chair by his desk, shot because he hadn’t paid his debts in time.” “Yes, you told me in an interview once.” I said. ITR2 mentioned that this market was simply crazy. (Field notes Lunch meeting at AT; September 2013)<sup>6</sup>

In light of working in a market which can confront the sales personnel with dangerous situations, building close and long lasting relations between traders and customers can be crucial. One essential step to building well-functioning relationships in the ethnic market seems to be the aforementioned focus on private

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<sup>6</sup> For the shooting episode see: Interview IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 1:01:03.7 - 1:04:07.7

conversations in work related practices, which all sales persons and leaders with a close physical presence to the field of ethnic business mentioned as being very important. As I will show later, spending ample business time on seemingly irrelevant small talk is not in line with ESAG HQ's work attitude, which aspires to be 'professional, efficient, and fast' (Field notes; Second Trainee Evaluation; June 2014). Therefore, ESAG HQ's preferred methods of doing business must have been challenged by the sales personnel of Turkish origin who, as both customers and former sales persons at other companies, had actively taken part in the ethnic market for many years. In doing so, they presumably learned the rules and practices of sales in the ethnic market, which they in their role as sales persons for ESAG tried to convey to ESAG's department of ethnic sales. The Danish workforce, on the other hand, probably had to learn these new approaches to sales, in which the most essential aspect can be creating a personal or almost friendship-like relationship with the customer. Such close relationships arguably have some advantages, such as gaining access to the entire network of customers as many of them are connected with each other or are even related to each other. Becoming part of their network may also function as being part of their 'safety net', which is an important aspect to consider in light of the market's 'darker side'. On the other hand, building a 'close relationship' with customers might result in more negative consequences as the customers may understand the relationship to be more like a friendship than a business relationship. Thus, the customer could call upon ESAG's obligations as a 'friend' rather than as a supplier of ethnic food products. Such a shift in identification from the side of the customer could substitute the notion of money with that of assistance and understanding when needed.

The personalities are different and they are very strong in the southern regions and so is the solidarity within the family and the circle of friends. And therefore where we are, sales to the ethnics, it is also very personal. They call if they have a headache. You're not simply a supplier, you are also a friend; you are obliged to listen to him. I could tell you stories all day long. I had a customer once who had to go to jail for 6 months and he was allowed

one phone call per week and he called me instead of his family. As a man he needed this strength; he needed to know that I was thinking about him, if I would let him down, because after 6 months he was supposed to do business again. Back then, he had only one shop but now he has seven and he is a good customer now. (...) The supermarket owners have a certain reputation and they do not want to lose that reputation because it's important for their existence and I am an important part of their reputation and they don't want to risk that. (Summary/Transcript informal conversation ITR2 at sales course, Sept. 2014, page 2: time stamp: 0:06:48.5-0:15:48.8)

Thus, on the one hand, spending what might be called 'private time' with customers seems to be time well spent in order to expand the customer network and thus enhance ESAG's market share. However, a few leaders, one of Danish and one of Turkish ethnicity, described the close relationship between sales persons and their customers as somewhat problematic. As some customers appeared to assume that ESAG's sales persons understood and identified with them, they may have thought that their challenging economic situation was a reasonable excuse for not complying with the payment terms set by ESAG; thus, in a manner of speaking, they paid whenever they liked, forcing the sales personnel to collect the outstanding debts from those customers who were not willing or, for whatever reason, unable to pay their debts. ITR1 called this procedure "a hard fight" (Interview ITR1; June 2013: time stamp: 0:06:34.0 – 0:07:39.8), as did ITR9 and ITR6. A possible answer to how this 'fight' could be solved or even circumvented in the first place is not easy to find. Nevertheless, ESAG's primary approach was to show patience and understanding for the customer, while also trying to make them pay nearer to the agreed deadline.

IDK2 mentions: "Of course I do understand your [ITR3's] view: the customer should pay on time and that is the view of ESAG, but it is our own fault: The job is that we all together should improve this with a lot of understanding and patience towards the customers." ITR3, however, stresses that she believes the customer can pay, but that he is cheeky and exploits the



situation. ITR2 replies: “Well you should go to the wholesaler and ask about the customer and then you might learn that we [ESAG] get the money from him much earlier than all the others. I know that the customer makes trouble and he troubles me every day, but if we lose this customer then we lose a big player with a lot of influence and then we lose the market in [name of town]. But I don’t understand why we have to discuss this matter every quarter again and again. We do sell goods; it’s not that we stand still.” (Field notes; Sales meeting at Sub.AT, September 2013: page 8f)

Balancing the pros and cons of being closely involved with the customer network (*social capital*) presented one of the major struggles in the relationship between IDK1 and ITR2. Yet, as the above quote illustrates, IDK1 approached this and similar struggles with an overall compromising attitude that appeared to be part of his preferred leadership practices, as I will discuss in more detail in the subsequent section (Section 5.3). The above quotes present the ethnic market as a rather harsh working place with internal logics that differ from those found in non-ethnic business sectors, where MNCs such as Nestlé would be the market leader (Interview IDK4; December 2012; time stamp: 1:16:16). While players in the field of non-ethnic business trade follow signed contracts, and thus in the case of a breach could file a suit, trade in the ethnic food market is less restrained as the ethnic minority Turkish customers and retailers do not necessarily rely on and follow contracts. Although they fear sanctions as a result of a contract breach (not meeting conditions of payment or national food laws), they also rely on their tightly-knit network (*social capital*) to help them, as IDK1 experienced several times. He told me a story of an ethnic Turkish owner of a supermarket chain who breached the Austrian law on statutory shop opening hours and was therefore forced to close down all of his 15 supermarkets at once. His extended family members also worked within the ethnic food business and were normally in fierce competition with each other. However, in this situation, they helped out, saved the products with a short BBD (Best Before Date) and paid his fine (Interview IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:48:44.2 - 0:53:10.0). To IDK1 this was an experience that demonstrated how different the

ethnic food market functioned in comparison to the non-ethnic food markets he was accustomed to working with. In this dissertation, this example, alongside the abovementioned quotes and thoughts, leads me to suggest that trust between ESAG's leaders and their employees might be difficult to develop if one has not experienced the other's societal and business contexts (*subfields*). As hinted at, ESAG's sales personnel need to find a balance between 'belonging to ESAG and belonging to their extended family or network of friends' on a daily basis (Field notes; Sales meeting AT; September 2013; page 9). The sales personnel's constant shifting of belonging or identifying seemed to be known to their direct leaders (*ibid.*). Therefore, both partners – the leader and the employee – know that the sales persons constantly find themselves in an identification process which, broadly speaking, revolves around balancing their belonging to the extended family who might need their help and understanding (Summary/Transcript informal conversation ITR2 at sales course, September 2014, page 2: time stamp: 0:06:48.5-0:15:48.8) with being loyal to the company and trying to collect outstanding debts despite being very close to the debtors and knowing that they should be fulfilling the debtors' expectations of them as 'friends and family members'. Therefore, I claim that in this special case the conditions or grounds for trust are not that easily framed by the organization's framework, its rules of conduct, or its 'value set' as outlined in Section 5.1. Considering that the sales persons' range of actions (*reasonable practice influenced by the doxa of the field*) not only is influenced by the organizational structure and the employees' position within ESAG but also by their position in the broader societal context seems to indicate that the ethnic Turkish sales personnel had to enact strategies which would secure them their position in the *field of ESAG* as well as in *the broader societal field*. Hence, it seems reasonable to suggest that social agents who find themselves maneuvering across two *overlapping fields* may enact what Emirbayer & Mische (1998:994) called "contextualization" which as outlined earlier (see section 3.2.5) entails a rather strong focus on "reflexivity" leading to "deliberative decision making" (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, as subsidiary employees do not seem to be familiar with ESAG's rules of conduct and 'value set' (i.e., the field's *illusio*), I claim that trust-building between HQ and subsidiary employees probably does *not emerge from common conditions* for trust in the sense that all organizational members more or less adhere to or are socialized into a common organizational logic of 'how things are done around here'. Rather, there appear to be quite diverse understandings of what resembles *reasonable business practices* when working in the field of ethnic sales. In other words, I argue that employees at HQs and those at the subsidiaries in general committed to a somewhat different *illusio*, i.e. the tacit belief in a given field's values, its game and its stakes. This probably also led them to assign different understandings to the notion and value of 'efficiency' which I turn to in the following section.

### **5.2.3 Struggles over the meaning of 'efficiency'**

The understanding of what constitutes efficiency and how it should be practiced is yet another example of 'struggle over best practices'. As hinted at, forming close connections with customers can be an efficient method of developing a customer network which would ultimately enhance ESAG's growth in the ethnic market, although it could and did indeed cause the challenges mentioned above. Nevertheless, such a personal and time-consuming approach could represent an efficient business practice at least from the perspective of ESAG's ethnic Turkish sales personnel. However, another contrasting interpretation of efficient business practices was found to influence internal collaboration which was particularly salient in IDK2's employee relationships. For the only female leader in ESAG's department of ethnic sales, IDK2, efficiency (maintaining and pursuing *economic capital*) is primarily about being a fast multitasking worker and working in a transparent and efficient manner, qualities which in her opinion are lacking in many employees of Turkish origin. For instance, IDK2 expected all ethnic minority Turks

working in sales support functions to reduce paperwork as much as possible and instead to learn how to use a modified and adjusted version of Axapta (a resource planning software). However, even though she tried to impose or teach them her version of 'efficiency', she had to discontinue because of what she framed as part of the Turkish culture, namely '*resistance to change*' and '*perfectionism* expressed in double-checking and control':

Those in the warehouse (...) do, of course, count the number of articles, but everything is counted again and checked again by the office personnel. That's another issue I cannot make sense of, but really that is not the way I would like to work; but that, uhm, since I work much with efficiency I really think they work in totally the wrong way down there [at Sub AT]. But here I am also forced to say that this is due to their culture. There are simply things we cannot change. (...) That's simply how they do things. And then, uhm, they were supposed to ... they should be connected to our Axapta ... that's also been a tough job because they, uhm, they do not really like changes, don't like to change things and we had to fight hard against their negative attitudes towards that. So, they have ... this has been kind of a hard nut to crack. And then I have just been down there again and that's a kind of follow-up to the things they are supposed to do. They still prefer to use paper and pencil and such manual things and that is simply ... well, we have left such things behind ages ago, right? You simply ought not to do this. So that was to ... to make them become more efficient, as efficient as possible when I was down there again. [her voice takes on an annoyed tone]. So, uhm, ... but they are very, the Turks down there, they are much more controlling, they check everything, simply double-check everything. And that is exactly something that I calculate will never pay off. There are few mistakes happening. Then you have to deal with the mistakes that happen and set them right when they appear. There is nothing more to that. But, uhm, .. they have very much the attitude that everything has to be perfect. (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:11:49.5-0:15:25.5)

Following IDK2, the subsidiary personnel tended to engage in work practices which she considered to be rather inefficient. Yet, she also seemed to have realized that she could not change all of the work habits practiced at the subsidiaries. Rather than engaging in many struggles at the same time, she seemingly managed to choose her battles wisely and only engaged in those she found to be important for the company's further economic success. The struggle over the implementation of Axapta was for instance one that had to be 'won'. Concerning the issues mentioned by IDK2, the employees of ethnic minority backgrounds pointed out some alternative interpretations of the same disputes. In regard to what extent Axapta should be used and adapted, IDE1 stated that:

Last year, we had a major change in our system. We have been, how to say, we have been connected to the ESAG-Server (...) Our requirements are different from those in, for example, Romania or Denmark (...) and it has been hard to explain to them [ESAG HQ] what it is we need and to make them understand why we need it. It was always like, uhm, and that really annoyed me, that they asked over and over again: Why do you need that, do you use it correctly, and do you really need that and so on. I work always with it and I need it to do my work, please believe me, it's true we really need it. (...) You cannot, for instance, apply rules - I call them rules - which fit the Danish key accounts to my small customers or my detail businesses; that doesn't work. There we, uhm, we needed a lot of changes, and you had to justify each and every change, you had to: Why is it they want this and why and why and why and why and why, and, how to put it, I simply reached my limits. That has been very hard. (Interview IDE1; May 2013: time stamp: 0:13:32.2- 0:15:11.5)

Regarding IDK2's observation that the Turkish ethnic minority employees used to "double-check" everything, a process she found rather inefficient, ITR1 described that strategy as important for two reasons: Not losing any of ESAG's money

(*economic capital*) and maintaining his and ESAG's reputation (*symbolic capital*) as an honest company which upholds its promises:

We have to be sure about our customers and they should also be able to trust us. If I promise a customer a certain price and afterwards I realize that I have miscalculated it, then it harms us because if I have promised him that price, I have to stick to it. Or if I have promised to deliver the goods by tomorrow, then the goods have to be there tomorrow because he has promised his customers that he will have the merchandise tomorrow. That's what I mean. (Interview ITR1; June 2013: time stamp: 0:53:25.0 - 0:56:53.7)

In combination with ITR2's earlier notion of the 'customer network', it could be considered efficient to not lose one's reputation with a customer, as this 'mishap' might easily spread across the customer network. On the other hand, IDK2's interpretation is also reasonable since double checking costs time that could be used on other tasks. IDK2's disaffirmation of extensive control and her attitude towards mistakes as something you would "set (...) right when they appear" (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:11:49.5-0:15:25.5) indicate that making mistakes is something that can happen and which ESAG employees are not 'punished for'. Making mistakes is portrayed as being an expected part of doing business. As stated above, most of the subsidiary employees, however, worked towards avoiding any mistakes. Making mistakes that could directly affect ESAG's customers was portrayed as potentially damaging the company's reputation due to the fact that ESAG's customers were tightly connected with each other; thus, these could theoretically hear about the 'mistake' and then use it 'against ESAG' when, for example, negotiating prices or extra merchandise. Hence, checking the goods with regards to correct labeling, amount, price, packaging, BBD, etc. prior to shipping made sense as seen from the subsidiary employees' perspective. Thus, it could be argued that the subsidiary employees invested time, which arguably represents economic capital in order to enhance or at least maintain ESAG's symbolic capital

as well as their own and ESAG's social capital in form of close customer ties. In turn, ESAG's enhanced symbolic capital in form of its reputation would ensure all employees a continuous income, i.e. economic capital. Thus, as is the case in any field (see section 3.2.2), different types of capital can be mobilized and converted into other valued forms of capital as I will describe in further detail in section 5.3.

Turning back to the issue of double-checking, it seemed possible that IDK2 observed this practice when assisting in installing and learning the Axapta software at AT. As indicated above, IDK2 seemed to have interpreted this practice as resembling close control. This, however, did not seem to be the case. According to the interactants at AT, they tended to assist each other and learn from each other rather than controlling each other, which ITR10 expressed in the following way:

Everything I do here I have learnt from my colleagues [at AT]. Without their help, I wouldn't be where I am today. Lastly, you have to learn for yourself and find out what's important and what's not, but if you are unassisted you stand there like a duck in a thunder storm (allein im Wald). (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:35:43.5-0:36:31.1)

Yet, during my field work at AT, I observed a combination of assisting, helping, and working independently, but also practices that could be framed as 'double checking', to use IDK2's expression. For example, ITR10 in particular would report many of his actions to ITR3, the subsidiary leader (Field notes AT; December 2014; page 3). While this could be framed as 'control', I understand it to be more along the lines of a practice that is influenced by a combination of the more pronounced hierarchy at AT and ITR3's diverse roles at this subsidiary. ITR3 not only functioned as AT's subsidiary leader, she also worked as the main sales person for AT's detail business as well being responsible for product procurement. As ITR10 was responsible for warehouse and order management (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:00:11.6-0:02:46.8), he needed to communicate more often with ITR3

to efficiently coordinate the flow of products without having to constantly rearrange them in AT's warehouse. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that especially the ethnic minority Turkish employees conveyed a working attitude which IDK1 called "a German business behavior translated into Turkish", i.e. according to IDK1 they embraced the notion of "Ordnung muss sein" (Interview IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:05:59.8 - 0:08:06.8). It may have been primarily this attitude which caused IDK2's irritation with regards to what she considered inappropriate business behaviors, i.e. still using pencil and paper, still making copies and filing them in lever arch files, double-checking and not having learned to use the computer effectively, to mention a few. Hence, it could be argued that IDK2's struggles over best internal business practices might have, to some extent, been caused by 'cultural differences' as she claimed. However, especially regarding the notion of 'double checking' they may also have been caused by AT's organizational structure and small size, which meant that ITR3 held three positions. Most importantly, however, with the exception of IDK1, HQ personnel were situated far from the ethnic market and were only seldom physically present in that market, i.e. when they visited the subsidiaries in person or spent some time with subsidiary personnel at the offices and, especially, in the field with the customers. Therefore, I claim that they lacked an in-depth understanding of how the subsidiaries' close position and connections to the ethnic market made 'control' a rather reasonable and efficient practice. On the other hand, since the majority of the subsidiary employees had never been to HQ they probably did not understand how and why IDK2 experienced certain practices to be more efficient than others. In addition, IDK2 struggled with ITR5's interpretation of ESAG's approach to balancing private and business related practices during work time as well as his, perceived, excessive use of speaking Turkish at HQ. Both of these struggles appear to refer to ITR5's problems of learning and adjusting to ESAG's approach to working within the confines of "Freedom with Responsibility", as I will further discuss in Section 5.4. As ITR5 was the first trainee at HQ with Turkish heritage, he struggled to learn ESAG HQ tacit rules which, according to IDK4, are not meant to be written down:



IDK4 points out that they don't want to introduce rules on when to do what and for how long. Rather, everybody has to find out for themselves based on the experiences made at the company. (Field notes: Second Evaluation Interview at HQ; June 2014; page 1)

In summary, the struggles above revolved around different understandings of what it means to work within the confines of "Freedom with Responsibility" (the field's *illusio*), how to understand and practice "business efficiency" (*economic capital*), to what extent and in what ways ESAG should employ the software system (Axapta), and to what extent and in which situations one should draw on one's cultural tools such as language proficiency and the practicing of customs (*embodied cultural capital*). As mentioned on several occasions, these struggles seem to relate to the first finding (see Section 5.1), which presented the perceived differences between ESAG HQ and its sales subsidiaries in terms of overall structure, work practices and logics. I argued that these differences tend to mirror ESAG's division into what could be called a *predominantly ethnic-Danish* and a *predominantly ethnic-Turkish* part, which coincide with the subfield *ESAG HQ* and *ESAG sales subsidiaries*, respectively; the former is embedded in a national Danish context and the latter in national Austrian and German contexts. Taking finding 1 into account, the overall struggles over best practice as outlined in this section might refer to the key challenge of balancing the ethnic Danish and ethnic Turkish preferred ways of doing business. In other words, how and to what extent should the logics of the *predominantly ethnic-Danish* and the *predominantly ethnic-Turkish* part be consolidated, if at all? Either way, it could be argued that these struggles emerged due to a variety of reasons, and cultural differences could be one of these reasons. As indicated above, ESAG's cultural complexity is expressed in a variety of ways. For example, it is mirrored in the subfields' *illusio*, *the distribution of capital in the field of ESAG*, *the interactants' perception of reasonable practices*, *their cultural habitus*, and *their possibilities of access to powerful positions in the field of ESAG*,

all of which I describe and analyze in the subsequent sections and further discuss in chapter 6.

As mentioned in this chapter, another reason for the analyzed struggles seems to be the business units' position in relation to the ethnic market, i.e. the closer the physical proximity and contact, the more the business units seem to have to incorporate or at least consider the customers' mindsets and preferred ways of doing business. Broadly speaking, the analysis so far suggests that ESAG HQ has the opportunity to function internally similar to any other predominantly Danish business unit situated in Denmark. The subsidiaries, however, must balance their internal work practices with ESAG HQ demands and expectations, the expectations and preferred methods of its customers in the ethnic market and, last but not least, the official requirements and laws stipulated by their respective national and supra-national authorities. Hence, the conditions for trust appear to be dissimilar as many leaders and their employees not only have dissimilar roots, backgrounds or embodied experiences (*habitus*), they also have a different understanding of their roles and areas of responsibility in ESAG (i.e., they can draw on different *forms of capital*) and seem to follow different work logics. These differences may be based in ESAG being a medium sized company that does not provide its (subsidiary) members with an overview of the company's structure, methods of command, role expectations in terms of a detailed work contract, explicitly communicated areas of responsibility, an overall mission or vision statement, or even something that resembles a 'code of conduct'. Hence, the actions of ESAG's employees and leaders do not seem to be confined by one common organizational structure and logic. Rather, ESAG's employees are meant to experience and learn the organization's logic while being a member. Hence, they are meant to familiarize themselves with the company, and thus, hopefully, become part of a shared mindset, i.e. grow together with HQ and become part of the 'ESAG family'. This, however, is difficult for the employees in ESAG's subsidiaries due to the abovementioned reasons. Therefore, while stable structures, including outlined roles and rules, may present familiarity and thus favorable grounds for trust (Meyerson, Weick & Kramer 1996;

Becker 2005, referred to in Möllering 2006), these structures seem to be present only at each of ESAG's units and are missing across ESAG as a whole, which can, but must not necessarily, negatively influence trust building between HQ and subsidiary employees. In any case, I argue that trusting in this study is not understood to be primarily based on similar *conditions* for trust. As the next sections will show, even though trusting in the case of ESAG is influenced by the organizational members' backgrounds (e.g., *cultural habitus*) and conditions (their *position* in the field of ESAG and the broader societal field), it tends to emerge due to the members' agency and their ongoing relationships, by virtue of which they appear to become more familiar with each other and ESAG. Thus, leaders who together with their employees dare to immerse themselves in the field of ethnic sales may have a better chance of developing and maintaining a trusting relationship. Moreover, these leaders and their employees arguably use emerging struggles to build awareness of differences, and try to act on and resolve these rather than letting them become serious obstacles during collaboration. Nevertheless, in order to act on them, they must draw on the tools available to them. Thus, they may draw on a combination of their *social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital*, and the *material objects* the context provides as well as the *power structures* they find themselves in and (re)produce. In other words, any action and leader-employee interaction at ESAG can be understood as being relational; it is embedded in a certain stable yet changeable structure and underlies tacit and explicit rules, and conscious and unconscious sense-making processes of the given context and relationship that are made against the backdrop of a certain stable dispositional mindset which Bourdieu called the habitus.

The following analysis of the individual leader-employee relations further identifies the challenges related to ESAG's division into subfields and the influence of other overlapping fields on trusting in the context of multicultural leadership.

### **5.3 Embodied experiences and mutual identification as enablers of trust: the possible strengths of fragmented leadership styles**

I try to stick to a Danish leadership style, the style I also use in Denmark, as much as possible. In Denmark we have the Danish organizational culture; we are very open-minded and trusting, at least here at ESAG we gloat about being very trusting and very little controlling. But often this is misunderstood by others as showing indifference. So, those I work with in Austria and Germany, they had a hard time understanding this. “Well, all Danes are always so happy, smiling, friendly and considerate. And suddenly you thump the table and say: Enough is enough. And we haven’t been warned at all.” They are used to much more control because of their upbringing, while we here at our place have the saying: ‘no news is good news’. And this is something I had to adjust to. I have to remember that I continuously have to exercise control and recognition towards them. It’s not enough to have Quarterly Meetings. So, in this case I had to adjust my way of holding a dialogue and had to realize that this should be an ongoing process: continuous reporting and teaching them that we expect them to report back to us so that we know where we’re standing. (Interview IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:08:23.6 - 0:12:12.5)

In the preceding chapter, I pointed to the perceived differences between ESAG’s HQ and its subsidiaries. Furthermore, I presented struggles between HQ and the subsidiary personnel which probably emerged from these perceived differences and vice versa. Thus, the emergent struggles might have made employees aware of their different understandings. This in turn could pave the ground for discussing and explaining these differences, enabling employees to encounter mutual similarities while becoming more familiar with each other. In the above quote, IDK1 highlighted perceived differences between the predominantly ethnic Danish HQ personnel and the predominantly ethnic Turkish subsidiary personnel. He furthermore indicated that he had incorporated this new knowledge into his

leadership toolbox in order to accommodate his employees' perceived needs regarding leadership. In other words, he tried to adjust his leadership style to the current situation, context and person which arguably mirrors a *reflexive approach*. This approach to leadership seemingly suggests that IDK1 adopted what Svenningsson et al. (2012) called 'fragmented leadership'.

In this chapter I present **Finding 3: Embodied experiences and mutual identification as enablers of trust: the possible strengths of fragmented leadership styles**. From the perspective of the intermediary leader, IDK1, and the subsidiary leader, IDK3, this section aims to investigate their leader-employee relations, i.e. IDK1's relationship with ITR1 and ITR2 and IDK3's relations with ITR4, IDK5, and ITR7-9 (indicated by red arrows in the figure below).

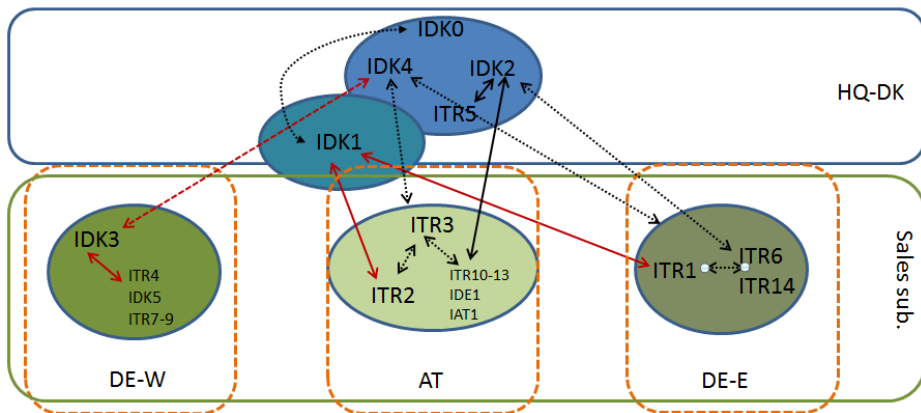


Figure: 10: Overview on IDK1's and IDK3's embedded leader-employee relations (solid red lines)

By drawing on observational and interview data, this part of the analysis examines how IDK1 used a combination of leadership styles to invoke trust in his employees while simultaneously fulfilling HQ expectations and structuring these relationships. As noted in Chapter 2, scholarly work on leadership is abundant and has resulted in a variety of conceptualizations of the term 'leadership'. Whilst in English speaking

countries there is a more or less clear distinction between the expressions ‘leadership’ and ‘management’, as laid out in chapter 2, this study took place in Danish and German speaking contexts where this distinction seems not to be that clear, particularly in the Danish context. When speaking about leadership in the Danish context, I used the expressions ‘leder/ledelse’, which could be translated as ‘leader/leadership’ *and* ‘manager/management’. Therefore, it is up to each person’s own interpretation whether they conceptualize ‘leder/ledelse’ along the lines of a person who influences and guides others (leader/leadership) or of a person who holds a certain position in an organizational hierarchy (manager/management). Within the German context, I used the expressions ‘Vorgesetzte(r)/Führungskraft/Führungsstil/Management’, which could be translated as ‘superior/executive/boss/leadership style/management’. Thus, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the expressions ‘management’ and ‘leadership’ have been used interchangeably. In regard to this dissertation’s main phenomenon, i.e. trust/trusting, I noted in Chapter 3 that *trusting as a situated relational and reasonable practice emerges from the interplay of agency as in the interrelated elements of iteration, projectivity, practical evaluation, habitus, and practical sense, all of which social actors draw from in different quantities in certain fields or contexts with their constraining and enabling power structures*. When this study’s interactants were asked what trust meant to them, many of them highlighted aspects that corresponded to the abovementioned elements.

In addition, in sections 5.3.4 and 5.3.5, I explore the relationship of ESAG’s expatriate leader (IDK3) with his employees at ESAG’s sales subsidiary in the western part of Germany (DE-W). By drawing on observational and interview data, this part of the analysis discovers how IDK3 invested time in becoming familiar with his employees in terms of their work abilities, loyalty towards the company but also their personal lives. While applying subtle control at the beginning of his relationship with ITR4, and ITR7-9, he seemed to mainly draw on his benevolence in order to empower his employees, who increasingly opened up. The above seems to indicate that this approach resulted in identification based trust, as this section

will point out. This study's empirical material, however, suggests that the trust process between IDK3 and his employees was catalyzed by a simultaneous process between IDK3 and HQ-leaders: While the entire staff at DE-W, including IDK3, increasingly had the impression of being treated unfairly by HQ and their trust in HQ arguably faltered, trusting across all members at DE-W seemingly turned into a strong identification based trust.

### 5.3.1 IDK1: Personal, trusting, assisting, controlling and not afraid of using perceived Turkish traits

IDK1 is an intermediary leader of Danish ethnicity who has, according to him (interview IDK1, April 2013; time stamp: 0:17:27.2-0:19:34.4), been with ESAG since 1996 and has had many different positions at that company over these years.

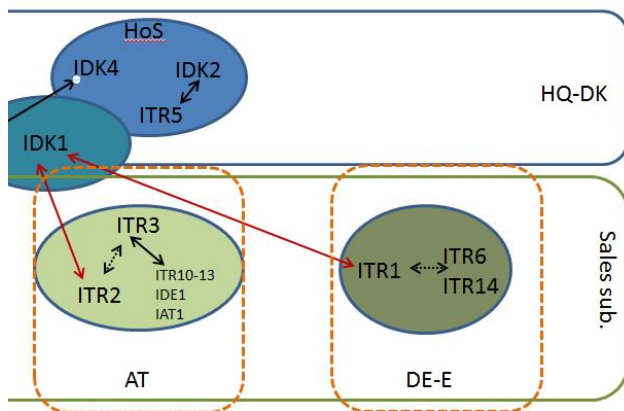


Figure 11: IDK1's leader-employee relations

At the time of this study, IDK1 worked as an intermediary leader/export manager at the department of ethnic sales and had been doing so since July 2011 (IDK1's LinkedIn profile). Before July 2011, he worked within the field of ethnic business as

well, yet in his role as export director for ESAG from 2007-2011. Prior to 2007 he had worked as a sales person for ESAG. Thus, IDK1 has had extensive intercultural contact, which he highlighted as being important for him to thrive in his job:

I have to say that is wonderful, this warmth and straightforwardness you encounter when you work with Turks; you're simply told right away if there is something that doesn't suit them. They like personal relationships; it's important to them that there is a 'good personal chemistry' which has to be attuned. And that's actually something I like a lot and it makes it fun to be here. There are so many facets to working with Turks. (Interview IDK1; April 2013: time stamp: 0:46:00.0 - 0:47:52.9)

According to IDK1, working with ethnic businesses tends to involve the whole person as personal relationships seem to be at the core of any business interaction, at least with people of Turkish origin. IDK1 talked about notions of 'warmth and straightforwardness', which he "likes a lot". During my field work, I myself found IDK1 to be 'straightforward and 'heartfelt', characteristics which might have helped him in building relationships with ITR1 and ITR2, who he supervised and coached in his role as intermediary leader. As the subsequent analysis will show, in addition to some of his personal characteristics, IDK1 appeared to use certain *cultural tools* to develop and maintain good relationships with his employees.

In general, IDK1 perceived trust as something one cannot live without and he assumed that trust was *the* prerequisite for doing business:

No, you cannot omit trust at any point in time. You always need trust. You need to trust those you work with and trust that those whom you work for are supporting you all the time. (Interview IDK1; June 2013: time stamp: 0:55:11.3 - 0:57:49.4)

As will become apparent during the further analysis, trust seemed to be institutionalized at ESAG HQ which means it was taken for granted and was perceived to support all organizational activities; in addition it was expected or



presumed by HQ personnel and management that this would also be the case at its subsidiaries. Hence, trust seems to represent a part of the conditional context in which IDK1 was embedded. Following Kroeger's (2013:270; emphasis added) conceptualization of institutionalized trust, "it is evident that trust is institutionalized predominantly on an *informal* plane. Its maintenance over time is largely *implicit* and *tacit* in nature. Importantly, however, this does not render it any less '*real*' or less *consequential* (...)." The consequences of an assumed high level of trust at ESAG HQ regarding its employees, leaders and practices have many facets, as the analysis will show. Perhaps due to his seniority of 26 years at ESAG and his upbringing in a society which, according to the OECD (OECD 2011; see also Fukuyama 2005) is characterized by a high level of generalized trust, IDK1 posited that he himself was a very trusting and trustworthy individual:

Uhm, yes, I'd say in general I really trust people. I am a really positive and open-minded person (...) yes I think in general I am very trusting no matter where I am. [Yes] I understand myself also to be a very confidence-inspiring and trustworthy [telephone ringing] person [hmm] which means that I am often invited by many people (Interview IDK1; June 2013; time stamp: 0.39:16.7 - 0:40:26.7).

The above quote indicates that IDK1 presumed that being "open" and "positively minded" signifies trustworthiness and inspires confidence in others. This resonates with Mayer et al.'s (1995) notions of benevolence as a factor in the perceived trustworthiness of a social actor. Being perceived as benevolent and showing goodwill towards others arguably makes IDK1 a well-liked guest and probably assists him in building relationships, especially when being 'open' and 'straightforward' appears to be a '*reasonable practice*' in a given relation, such as relationships with employees with Turkish backgrounds (see earlier quote from IDK1). Besides being important for relationship-building, IDK1 believed that trust heavily influenced a person's work ability and he even considered collaboration within a company unthinkable without trust. Trust itself, however, is hard to define, even though it is considered extremely important at ESAG:

And this is once again, I would say, this kind of trust which basically lies with our CEO that you simply trust each other because we cannot, because if we don't do that there is no reason to work together, if you cannot rely on each other you cannot function (...). This is about, how to say it; these common human trust issues which one cannot define. But if there's no trust, well, then everything stops [hmm]. And then there is no reason for us to have some people who give us something if you don't trust them to do their best in their role as employees in this company [yes] (Interview IDK1; June 2013: time stamp: 0:17:12.0 - 0:20:18.5).

As hinted at, trust at ESAG seems to be institutionalized (this kind of trust which basically lies with our CEO that you simply trust each other) and can thus be conceived as being a tacit part of ESAG's organizational culture. IDK1's statement furthermore suggests that trust is a kind of prerequisite for ESAG's survival (But if there's no trust, well, then everything stops).

From IDK1's perspective, it thus seems reasonable to suggest that ESAG's institutionalized trust provides the conditional context for any organizational or individual practice within the company. Trust seems to simply 'be' there; it is taken for granted even though, or perhaps because, it is understood to lie at the core of any reasonable cooperation. Given that IDK1 had been working and living in a context characterized by a fairly high level of trust, it is not surprising that IDK1 pointed out initiating any interaction within, but also outside, the company with a rather high level of trust:

At the private and the professional level I think of trust as a process and an experience which you have to build up over time. [Hmm] Uhm, at the beginning the level of trust is enormously high because you also have enormously high expectations; well, this idea you have that's *the* idea [hmm]. That's the right idea [hmm] (Interview with IDK1, June 2013: Timestamp 0:50:35.7 - 0:54:09.3)

However, he also indicated that trust building takes time, and that the intensity with which he trusts may thus change over time. He argued that the reason for putting enormous trust in the other was due to the enormous expectations he had in regard to, for example, a certain business idea. It seems that the more there was at stake, the more he trusted others and himself, while he also expected trust from his superiors and subordinates. The following quote provides an example of this approach to and understanding of trust in regard to risk taking:

No, you can never do without trust [okay]. You always have to have trust within the equation. [Hmm] You need to trust those whom you work together with and those you work for [Hmm] uhm support you all the time. (...) Well when I come home and report what I've experienced [yes], then they [his superiors] must believe me in what I'm saying [yes]. I do expect that. And to say it again, this trust enables me to always try my best to push this company even further [hmm]. Because if there is no trust in that the risks I run get honored somehow, [hmm] well then I would not take any risks. You could say that the willingness to take risks is proportional to the trust you're shown. [Yes, yes] Do you understand what I mean? [Yes] If I engage in a business (...) which is slightly bigger or different in comparison to those I normally handle [hmm] but I trust that our production unit can handle the order [hmm] and does handle the order [hmm], well then I know that it also will work out next time. And that's how things are connected and next time I might dare to go even a step further [hmm] because I know that's for our own good. [Yes] Well, that's kind of again [that's interesting], how to put it, freedom with responsibility, that's what it turns into when you start a relationship which expands over time. Then freedom with responsibility is the driving force. [hmm] (...) you can do a lot. It's obvious thought that we have to educate each other properly and that we know what we're talking about. Having said that, we trust you to do the best you can wherever you are in the world. (Interview IDK1; June 2013: time stamp: 0:55:11.3 - 0:57:49.4)

According to IDK1's account, he expected his superiors to trust him, which enabled him to run such business risks as dealing with unknown customers, taking bigger orders, or doing business in different and unfamiliar situations. IDK1 indicated that successfully managed risks support ESAG in achieving its overall business goals. IDK1 furthermore explained that his willingness to take risks was commensurate with the perceived and experienced trust placed in him by his superiors.

Jointly, the above extracts are useful as they seem to illustrate how IDK1 comprehended trust, its development, and its consequences. Moreover, the quotes reveal IDK1's understanding of ESAG's corporate culture and business goals, and thus what he considered reasonable and expected behavior, which in turn influenced his understanding and practice of leadership and trust. IDK1 seems to conceptualize trust as "something hard to define", but nevertheless a part of the contextual background for his practices within and outside ESAG. This perceived (institutionalized) trust seems to have fostered IDK1's inclination for risk-taking, which he in turn understood as enhancing the company's competitiveness in the ethnic market. In his account, IDK1 furthermore pointed to the concept of "Freedom with Responsibility" [frihed under ansvar] as the "driving force of conduct". Yet, on the other hand, IDK1 also pointed to 'trust' as the main basis for organizational practices at ESAG. Thus, IDK1's statements seem to indicate that (institutionalized) trust and the philosophy of "Freedom with Responsibility" are important and valued aspects of ESAG that are probably also interconnected. From a Bourdieusian viewpoint, one could argue that social, organizational and interactional structures, such as the notion of "working within a framework of Freedom with Responsibility", are produced and reproduced by ESAG's organizational members over time. In the case of ESAG, these structures appear to have become a widely *shared reality* for most of its members, especially its members at HQ. Thus, the notion of "Freedom with Responsibility" has probably become a kind of emergent blue-print for the rules of interactions at ESAG; these informal rules of interaction arguably allow a variety of possible actions (the freedom part) while simultaneously restricting other actions (the realm of responsibilities). Hence, ESAG's

organizational members not only have to agree upon the balance between freedom and responsibility, they furthermore need to learn about the organizational, and perhaps even moral, and social responsibilities expected of them. The ‘educational or learning aspect’ was highlighted by IDK1 in his account of ESAG’s employees first having to “educate each other properly” and “learn what the company and the work is all about” before a leader would have “confidence in you and your commitment, wherever you are”. A similar explanation was given by IDK3 and IDK4. Thus, at ESAG the relationship between the notion of “Freedom with Responsibility” and trusting seems to be thus: Only when there is broad agreement on the rules and the common goals of the game (*the illutio of the field of ESAG*) and the rules of interaction does confidence or trust become possible and leads to employee empowerment. In fact, IDK1 explained his role as intermediary leader as revolving around “assistance and coaching and making sure that there is a connection between the ideas we have here at HQ and how these are translated and carried out in reality at our different locations” (Interview IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:01:20.5 - 0:02:38.8). Thus, he arguably took an active part in aligning rules and ideas about goals across ESAG’s diverse sales subsidiaries. As I will discuss later, IDK3’s role as expatriate leader of DE-W could be understood in a similar way.

In short, IDK1 seemed to approach trust from the following circumstances: He understood his general trusting approach as a direct result of having grown up in a society which he experienced as being built on trust. He also described ESAG, with its Danish HQ, as being steeped in trust. As a consequence, his interpretations of trust seem to mirror these perceived circumstances, i.e. his *habitus* had incorporated trust as *modus operandi*. IDK1 spoke of *trust being necessary for any meaningful interaction* and, in fact, as an *enabler of interaction and risk taking* because without knowing that HQ would back his decisions due to their trust in him, he would have been unable to function as a successful, risk-taking and self-confident sales person. Furthermore, IDK1 interpreted *trust as the opposite of control*, and thus *indirectly connected trusting to his Danish leadership style* (Interview IDK1; April 2013; time

stamp: 0:08:23.6 - 0:12:12.5). Moreover, he interpreted trust as an especially rewarding resource when working across borders; on the one hand, trust is employed to foster a common understanding but it can also be transferred to mutual familiarity and an everyday which functions to everyone's satisfaction. In that sense, trust seems to represent a valued form of *capital*:

It can't be different, because – as mentioned earlier – we work across borders, we work outside the realm of control and this trust we show each other [hmm] has to be converted into something else; there emerges a familiarity and an everyday which functions to both parties' satisfaction [hmm] (IDK1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:20:51.7 - 0:24:33.6)

In terms of interpretations of trust, IDK1 furthermore stated that trust is a process that in his case would start with a high level of trust. This seems to be in contrast to Lewicki & Bunker's model of trust development (1996) which suggests that relationships commence from a rather low level of trust which they call *calculation-based trust*. Perhaps, it could be argued that *institutionalized trust* at ESAG has been developed based on *generalized trust* which is argued to build the foundation of Danish society. In that sense, the institutionalized trust present at ESAG has probably been developed outside the company, yet following Lewicki & Bunker's model. On the other hand, this finding may indicate that once institutionalized trust has been developed, it become a taken for granted condition for trusting. Thus, I suggest that if institutionalized trust were incorporated into Lewicki & Bunker's model, it either should be situated at the highest level thus following or be part of identification-based trust. However, according to the above finding (see also section 5.5) institutionalized trust could also represent the first level of trust development, yet, the following levels would then rather represent the erosion of trust. The latter I will describe and discuss in sections 5.3.4 and 5.3.5.

By virtue of his position as intermediary leader, IDK1 seemed to be more powerful than his sales personnel with Turkish backgrounds, especially because they understood their positions along the line of subordinates who, at the end of the day,

had to comply with IDK1's orders. Nevertheless, ITR1 and ITR2 had slightly different trajectories regarding their past work experiences and their current situation at ESAG, which seemed to have had an influence on their relationships with IDK1.

### **5.3.2 ITR1: Neither a bird nor a camel, but a loyal, hardworking sales person with a Turkish touch**

ITR1 was the main sales person at DE-E, which was established in 2005; thus, at the time of my field study at DE-E, ITR1 had known IDK1 for almost 10 years. At the age of 22, ITR1 had moved from Turkey to Germany where he worked in companies with a multicultural workforce which, according to him, had never been a problem because "people are people" (Interview ITR1; June 2013; time stamp: 0:49:40.9 – 0:50:56.9). Hence, it seems that ITR1 was used to working within workforces comprising different people in terms of "place of birth, language, religion or name" (ibid.). Since IDK1 was ITR1's leader, and DE-E was jointly developed by them and ITR6, all three had been familiar with each other's work practices for some time. Due to ESAG's organizational structure, the matrix structure, ITR1 could not be considered ITR6's subordinate even though ITR6 led the subsidiary in terms of accountancy, logistics and "being the gofer" (Interview ITR6; June 2013; time stamp: 0:06:20.2-0:07:50.4). Hence, ITR1 could be conceptualized as being more or less self-managed, which was also explained by his role as sales person that meant that he spent approximately 90 % of his working time in the field, i.e. in his car visiting existing customers or trying to canvass new ones. Since he used a company tablet for order registrations, he was rarely in contact with ITR6 or her co-worker ITR14, which I also became aware of during my field trip to DE-E. If ITR1 was in need of information, he would call ITR14, but most of the time he contacted IDK1 since "he's always happy to help" (Interview ITR1; June 2013; time stamp: 0:49:40.9 – 0:50:56.9).

In terms of trust, ITR1 mentioned, somewhat between the lines, that people of Turkish origin do not trust others as easily as Danes and Germans seem to do. He remarked that Danes and Germans were usually too sweet-natured, too nice, too trusting towards the Turkish customers. The Turks had a greater chance of getting better, i.e. lower, prices from the Danes than from him (Field notes; Sub.DE-East; June 2014, page 7). In saying so, ITR1 arguably expressed that, in general, people of Turkish heritage were less trusting than Danes and Germans, which also was expressed by for example ITR4 (Interview with ITR4 and IDK3; September 2014; time stamp: 0:47:29.8-0:47:50.3), ITR2 (Informal Conversation ITR2; September 2014; page 2); ITR9 (Interview ITR9; May 2015; time stamp: 0:13:00.0-0:15:15.5) and ITR14 (Interview ITR14; June 2013; time stamp: 0:14:17-0:14:36). The rather cautious approach to trust expressed by some ethnic Turkish employees seems to coincide with findings on generalized trust by the OECD (OECD 2011 and Fukuyama 2005), which found that the level of generalized trust was very high in Denmark, very low in Turkey and on an average level in Germany and Austria. Yet, some ethnic minority Turkish employees pointed out to be very trusting towards persons they are unfamiliar with (e.g., Interview ITR3; May 2013; time stamp: 1:08:59.1-1:12:35.2; ITR8; April 2014; time stamp: 0:04:45.4-0:07:25.5; and ITR14; June 2013; time stamp: 0:13:34-0:14:04).

As ITR1 was raised in Turkey and had been living as part of an ethnic Turkish minority in Germany (the broader *societal field*) for about 20 years while being employed by ESAG for 10 years arguably indicates that his conditions for perception (*habitus*) and agency differ from IDK1's conditions outlined earlier. In terms of cultural identity (*cultural habitus*), for example, ITR1 mentioned that he, along with other Turks living in Germany, felt as if they were an "ostrich, i.e. neither a bird nor a camel", which means that he felt neither Turkish nor German but both at the same time (*bi-cultural habitus*) and at different levels, depending on the circumstances (Field notes; Observation DE-E; June 2014; page 6). The ostrich metaphor seems to describe a situation of fluctuating identification between arguably rather different ethnicities. However, it seemed that ITR1 had found a



solution to his situation of belonging to an ethnic minority in Germany and working for a Danish company: In both the business sphere and the private sphere, he chose to take on what he considered to portray ‘professionalism’ which arguably depicted a none-Turkish trait and combined them with his knowledge of Turkish culture. For example, he mentioned that “Turks are far too emotional and it doesn’t need to be that way. I think that is a mistake; one should try to be a bit more professional” (Interview: June 2013; Timestamp: 1:08.11.8 – 1:08:48.8). Moreover, besides being ‘less emotional and more professional’ than the ‘Turks’, ITR1 pointed out that, in contrast to ITR6, he considered himself to be a “relaxed Muslim” who would drink alcohol and had no problems eating in a restaurant serving pork dishes (Field notes; Observation DE-E; June 2014; page 6; Field notes Lunch meeting; June 2014). These and other differences between ITR1 and ITR6, who considered herself to be the ‘office leader’ of DE-E, resulted in trouble, which probably made him avoid ITR6 as much as possible. In contrast to the other subsidiary members, ITR1 did not spend any non-business hours with ITR6 or ITR14. He pointed out that he, of course, would follow certain Turkish traditions and would take part in the ‘Turkish baby shower’, for example, but he would not blend business with his private life (Interview ITR1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:53.11.3 – 0:53:20.2)

In terms of trust, ITR1 mentioned that trust building takes time because you “need to experience (“ertasten/palpaté”) the other before you could trust them” (Interview ITR1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:09:38.2 - 0:12:24.4). He continued to tell me that trusting requires “knowledge of the human nature”, which is something one acquires throughout life. However, he also relied on third party information as he would “get help from his wide circle of acquaintances” in order to learn about, for example, potential new customers (ibid.). In that sense, belonging to the customer network could be a competitive advantage for learning about the perceived trustworthiness of potential customers. As mentioned earlier, many of ESAG’s ethnic sales persons with Turkish origins seemed to be enmeshed in such a network. Thus, when IDK1 mentioned that it ‘takes Turks to fully access the ethnic market’, he might not only have meant their *cultural capital*, but also their *social capital*.

When I asked ITR1 to tell me about trust in his own words, he said:

That is hard to say. Trust is good, control is better, right? Well, trust has to be mutual, not one-sided. If a customer has promised me to pay his bill, then this has to happen. Of course, there something can always happen that causes a delay, but then at least he has to inform me about that. Well, you win the other's trust when you are honest and when you stay honest. This means that when I have promised the customer a certain price, which could perhaps be wrong, well then I have to stick to that. As I said, trust has to be mutual and it takes time but it can be destroyed in no time at all. And I like to be trusted and I like to trust, but I also prefer to always choose the safer way. I try to minimize our risks. (Interview ITR1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:53.11.3-0:56:53.7)

This quote seems to illustrate that ITR1 calculates whom to trust and with what based on the perceived risks and his information or knowledge about the other. To him, trust thus seems to be a balancing act which is informed by his knowledge of human nature and thus by his experiences with others in regard to trust. While IDK1 suggested that he would engage with others based on trust, ITR1 rather seems to take small steps and first calculate the perceived risks. Arguably, ITR1 predominantly portrays trust as a rational choice (Coleman 1990) based on beliefs of trustworthiness (Mayer et al. 1995) such as the customers' ability to pay for the delivered goods but also their benevolence and their willingness to pay for these goods. Hence, ITR1 seemed to understand trust more along the lines of a practice to be tested in small and cautious steps, while IDK1 portrayed any interaction as being based on a rather high initial level of trust. Thus, IDK1 and ITR1 seem to have quite different ideas about the terms of their engagement in unfamiliar relationships.

### ***Experiences of trust between intermediary leader IDK1 and sales person ITR1***

In regards to his relationship with IDK1, ITR1 stated that it took some time to build trust. As mentioned above, he took small steps and tested how far he could trust IDK1:

In the beginning we of course were all skeptical because nobody knew each other: they didn't know us and we didn't know them. This of course takes time and at some point we got to know each other. Knew how we were and therefore, we knew a bit better in which ways we could react. (Interview IDK1 June 2013: time stamp: 0:44:32.4 - 0:46:23.0)

I understand this quote to portray several aspects. On the one hand, ITR1 once again seems to indicate that trust is a mutual practice based on information and knowledge of the other. On the other hand, he suggests that 'they' – probably DE-E's workforce – knew IDK1 better after cooperating with him for a while; although they did not know him wholly. ITR1 speaks of "knowing a bit better in which ways we can react", which arguably points to viewing interactions as a process as he now seems to know how he may react in certain situations, but also how IDK1 might react in the same situation. Hence, knowing each other arguably confines his range of possible actions in two ways; firstly, it seems to permit practices he would not have dared to engage in at the beginning of the relationship. Secondly, knowing each other also seems to have restricted ITR1's repertoire of *reasonable behavior* as some actions or reactions would seem out of place precisely because they know each other better which seems to coincide with Möllering's (2006:89f) notion that the actors' frame of judging what signals trust and what not changes over the course of trust building.

In regard to reasonable practices in his relation with IDK1, ITR1 (Interview ITR1, Interview June 2013: time stamp 0:44:32.4 - 0:46:23.0) stated that "one should know one's boundaries (*the field's doxa*) and should know what the superior demands, which however would also be part of the work contract. One is supposed to fulfill one's obligations as much as possible and that's pretty much it." Arguably, ITR1 conceptualized and practiced his relationship with IDK1 within the confines of his work contract. He seemed to simply fulfill his role as much as possible. His reactions at the sales course may support this assumption. While some of his colleagues with Turkish roots seemed to question the usefulness of the course (as described in Section 5.2), he was the only person of Turkish origin who thrived at

the course. For example, he was one of the most active course members and made the effort to present his accumulated knowledge whenever an assignment was given, thus arguably trying to fulfill HQ's expectations (Field notes; Sales Course; September 2014; e.g., page 6). During our interview, ITR1 furthermore mentioned that:

Working at ESAG, in the ethnic market, presents a challenge and you work and fight as well as you can to be successful. And then when you are successful, you are happy; both sides are happy, the company and you. And this is acknowledged, I think, from the Danish side, right? [ITR1 turns his face towards IDK1 who is working at his laptop and doesn't seem to be listening to our conversation. I said: Well, IDK1 can't hear this.] Okay. [Sounding rather disappointed]. (Interview ITR1; April 2013; time stamp: 0:32:25.1 - 0:33:37.1)

In addition to giving the impression of being eager to fulfill ESAG HQ's expectations, this quote seems to visualize that acknowledgement and recognition play an important role for ITR1. However, as the further analysis will show, recognition and acknowledgement appear to be similarly important for other subsidiary employees, while a lack of recognition seems to enhance experiences of distrust, which I will outline in Section 5.4. Arguably, IDK1 learned about this aspect of recognition during his time as intermediary leader, as indicated in the quote at the beginning of this chapter. On another occasion, IDK1 also spoke of control, which he only used occasionally to reassure himself that his trust in ITR1 was not misplaced (Interview with IDK1, June 2013: Timestamp 0:25:15.5 - 0:28:25.5). IDK1 furthermore explained that trust was a form of a good "gut feeling" which was enhanced when his employees revealed their mistakes or negative customer relationships to him, which he interpreted as 'being honest and not simply telling him what he wants to hear' (ibid.). In other words, IDK1 assumed that his employees did not fear any repercussions in terms of being laid off when making mistakes. Instead, together with his employees, IDK1 would try to find a joint solution. He remarked: "And perhaps you have to assist each other a bit more, but

this patience with each other has always been there and it takes this patience to finally be able to say: Our approach to control pays off and now we have employees who are able to do their jobs well and who fit in” (Interview with IDK1, June 2013: Timestamp 0:20:51.7 - 0:24:33.6). Thus it could be said that IDK1 seems to build trust grounded in a combination of ‘active trust’ based on ‘institutionalized trust’ and subtle control. A very similar approach is taken by IDK3, the subsidiary leader of DE-W, in his relation to his employees, as I will outline in a later section. This substantiates the assumption that trust seems to be institutionalized at ESAG. However, it seems that in order to start the trust process, IDK1 also requires certain amount of openness, suggesting that openness is a main building block for trust: “Actually, this openness is the basis for us trusting each other” (Interview with IDK1, June 2013: Timestamp 0:36:21.4 - 0:38:27.8). Hence, being open and honest could be perceived as both an expression of trust as well as laying the grounds for trust. Openness and the ability to express an opinion were also indicated by ITR1 as characterizing his relationship with IDK1 (Interview June 2013: Timestamp: 0:37:18.0 - 0:37:56.6), although he never seemed to have challenged IDK1’s position as his leader (Interview ITR1; June 2013; time stamp: 0:40:59.5-0:42:16.5).

As mentioned earlier, ITR1 expressed the intention to behave in a more ‘professional’ manner, as he in general was less ‘emotional’ and did not combine private and business issues. IDK1, however, tended to spend time talking about family issues, for example with ITR6 and ITR14, the female subsidiary members at DE-E. He would also greet them following Turkish customs, i.e. kissing each cheek of ITR6 and ITR14, although this might also have been an expression of their ‘friendship’, as indicated by ITR6 and ITR14 (Interview ITR6; June 2013; time stamp: 0:06:20.2-0:07:50.4; Interview ITR14; June 2013; time stamp: 0:09:18-0:10:15). In any case, IDK1’s leadership style seems to have resembled a very personal, friendly and assisting style, which ITR6 found to be in stark contrast to what she had experienced regarding her past superiors, whom she had been afraid of (ibid.).

In summary, the trust process in IDK1's relationship with ITR1 and the DE-E staff in general could be visualized as follows:

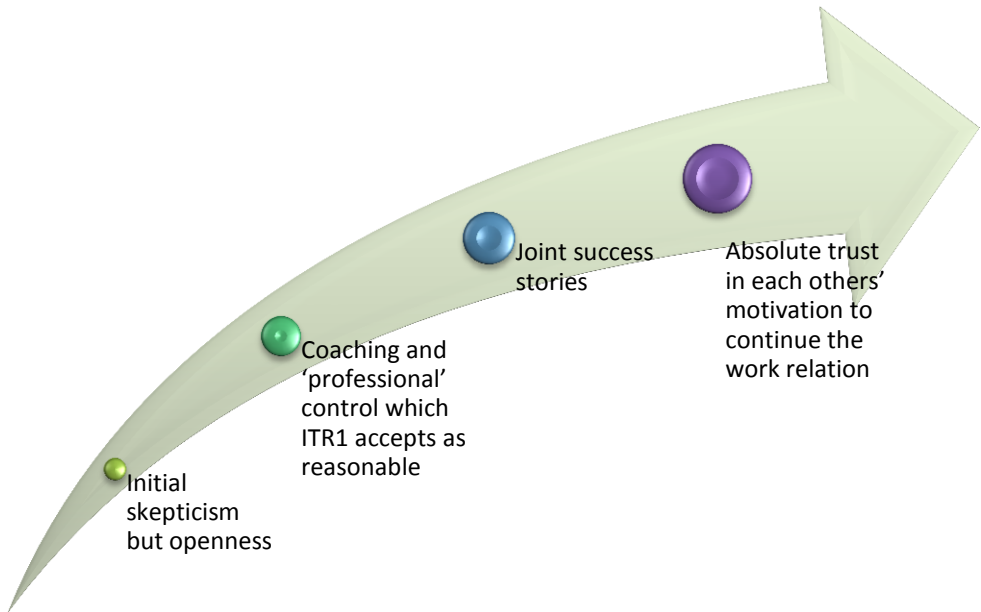


Figure 12: The process of trusting between IDK1 and ITR1

In short, this process seems to have been initiated by openness, institutionalized trust and the employment of subtle yet professional control mechanisms. IDK1 used a combination of leadership styles which predominantly seemed to be informed by the philosophy of “Freedom with Responsibility”. Therefore, as will become more evident in the analysis of his relationship with ITR2, he implemented a more ‘top-down approach’ when his patience had been overstrained, blended business and private spheres when appropriate (drawing on *Turkish cultural capital*) and preferentially used a subtle approach to control (*symbolic capital*), thus grounding his leadership more on trust than on control.

### **5.3.3 ITR2: A real sales person, close to the customers and loyal to ESAG**

As mentioned in Section 5.1, in 2000 ESAG acquired an Austrian supplier of ethnic food products, including its workforce. As IDK1 was working with ethnic sales at ESAG at that point in time, he became partly responsible for the Austrian subsidiary and also for ITR2 as he was the primary sales person. In comparison to ITR1, ITR2 had far greater experience in ethnic sales work as he had had his own company before starting as a sales person at the Austrian supply firm. ITR2 worked in a similar way to ITR1; both had key accounts and spent most of their working hours on the road and with the customers. Since the Austrian subsidiary was situated between its dairy and the main market locations, ITR2 only occasionally visited it. Hence, his main contact with both IDK1 and the subsidiary personnel was by phone. As ITR2 had customers not only in Austria but also in Bavaria, he used excessive time for transport, which is why he received a rather comfortable and big company car. In contrast to ITR1, ITR2 was not born in Turkey but grew up with his Turkish family in Austria. Concerning his working life, ITR2 stated that it would be impossible to separate the private sphere from the business sphere (Summary Feedback to my presentation at Sales Course; September 2014; page 1). Therefore, his main job, i.e. selling ESAG's products, constituted a small portion of his working day because the networking occupied most of his time; nevertheless, the latter ensured the further. ITR2 said: "The main issue is actually marginal and the minor point is primary" (ibid.). Possibly due to his experience in the ethnic market but also his rather 'philosophical perspective', he was convinced that 100% trust did not exist because we are all humans, and thus the other always has the choice to act as he or she sees fit. There is always this freedom for the other (the trustee) which represents the risk he would have to take (as the trustor) (ibid., page 2; time stamp: 0:13:59.7). Hence, freedom and risk seem to be understood as being connected in a dialectic relation. In his view, trust was a word which when spoken or thought of turns into a good feeling even though one doubts the other's intentions. He furthermore mentioned that one trusts in order to reach one's goals (ibid.; time

stamp: 0:17:49.8). Thus, quite similar to IDK1 he indicated that trust enables actions which would otherwise not be possible. Yet, I can only speculate whether he meant that trust empowers only the trustor or both actors; the trustor and the trustee. However, as ITR2 seemed to be rather reluctant to trust, he may have meant that the trustor can use trust as a tool to reach his goals. This argument appears to have been reflected in ITR2's notion of self-confidence, which he understood to be a crucial 'weapon' for sales persons in the ethnic market (Informal conversation; ITR2; September 2014; page 3; time stamp: 0:15:48.8-0:24:42.2).

Similar to ITR2, he connected trust with knowledge of human nature (Menschenkenntniss) and thus considered trust a process that takes time. In an informal conversation, he used the expression of "throwing a bone to the other and seeing how that person reacts" (Informal Conversation ITR2; September 2014: page 2) as an approach to trust, which seems to resemble ITR1's approach of small steps and testing trust as mentioned above. He furthermore expanded this notion with yet another metaphor when he spoke of trust in terms of a construction site: The quality and make-up of a piece of land influences the type of house you can build on it, i.e. whether a bungalow or a palace. This notion arguably refers back to having certain knowledge of the other and knowledge of human nature in general. Arguably, ITR2's understanding of trust coincides primarily with Lewicki & Bunkers' model of trust development, seeing that ITR2 would base his trust on information gathered prior to the enactment of *calculation-based* trust. It seems that he primarily 'tested' the other's trustworthiness by "throwing a bone and waiting what happens". Thus his approach seemed to mirror Möllering's assumption "that actors may actively produce mutual experiences with the aim of testing whether a trust relationship is feasible, but without being able to know in advance the associated benefits and risks" (Möllering 2006:94).

### ***Experiences of trust between ITR2 and IDK1***

ITR2's work and life experiences and knowledge arguably made him what IDK1 called "a real sales person who is able to shift his attitude by 180 degrees, from having been absolutely against all of my points to being loyal and hitting the ground



running as soon as he leaves his car [in order to visit a customer]” (Interview IDK1; April 2013; time stamp 0:12:28.0 - 0:16:30.5). It may be that because ITR2 had been working within the field for many years, he had also experienced the more dangerous side of the ethnic market, as mentioned earlier. The same is true for IDK1, as has already been pointed out, and thus both have made similar experiences in the field. In fact, during the quarterly sales meeting at the Austrian subsidiary, I observed that they made sense of outstanding payments, reactions on the market and the customers’ use of merchandise in similar ways; thus, they seemed to have a similar *practical sense of what constituted reasonable actions*. (Field notes; Quarterly Sales Meeting AT; September 2013; e.g. third and last paragraph on page 6). On the other hand, IDK1 also challenged ITR2’s ideas in regard to best practices in the field of ethnic sales. For example, when ITR2 mentioned that he simply needed more money to market ESAG’s products on the Austrian market, IDK1 tried to explain that this would not be possible because even though he could follow ITR2 in his arguments, he would also have to explain to HQ why they should invest more money in marketing in Austria than they did in Germany (Field notes; Quarterly Sales Meeting AT; September 2013; last paragraph on page 14). By explaining his situation, IDK1 made it easier for ITR2 to understand his situation, and thus ITR2 reconsidered and reduced the amount of money he thought he would need. IDK1 and ITR2 agreed on the new marketing budget following a short discussion. It could be argued that IDK1 and ITR2 enhanced their mutual understanding of the other by discussing each other’s situation and *position in terms of power in the field of EASG*.

When asked about trust in his relationship with IDK1, ITR2 stated that he would trust IDK1 the most out of all his co-workers because

I make more business with IDK1, more intense business and negotiations. Therefore I know that he keeps his word, he does that, I know that he doesn’t have a second agenda. We collaborate well” (Interview ITR2; September 2013; time stamp: 0:13:24.7-0:13:24.7).

Arguably, his intense negotiations with IDK1 seem to be an important factor in testing whether IDK1 keeps his word or not. Thus, it seems that the mutual struggles over best sales practices on the ethnic market influence trust building because the way in which they are resolved provides ITR2 with indications as to whether IDK1 is honest and loyal towards him. In contrast to ITR1, who did not challenge IDK1 and instead followed what he understood to be part of his written work contract, ITR2 seemed to draw on his enormous knowledge of the ethnic market when discussing certain marketing or sales approaches and seemed to work more independently than ITR1. Even during private conversations, IDK1 and ITR2 challenged each other, although it was in a playful manner and they tended to draw on cultural stereotypes (Field notes; Lunch Meeting; September 2013). During these conversations I had the impression that they knew and respected each other. In general, IDK1 and ITR2 seemed to share a similar embodied experience of being a sales person on the ethnic market; they shared the same teasing language and used their struggles to position themselves as the more knowledgeable actor in a certain area of ethnic sales, or rather to test out or 'fight over' their 'rightful' positions. These struggles seemed to have heightened their knowledge of and respect towards each other, which arguably resulted in an overall aligned view on the rules of the game.

In summary, the trusting process in IDK1's relationship with ITR2 may look as follows:

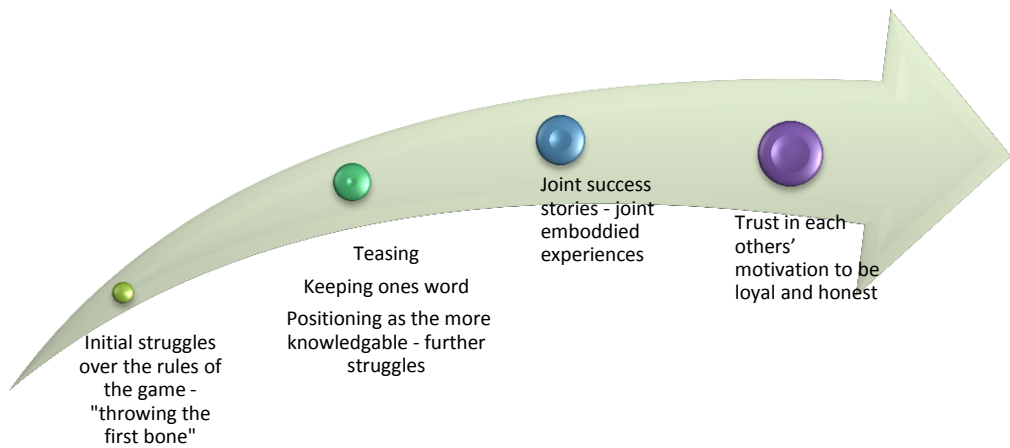


Figure 13: The process of trusting between IDK1 and ITR2

In short, from IDK1's perspective, this process was initiated by openness, institutionalized trust, subtle yet professional control and the use of teasing. Again, IDK1 used a combination of leadership styles which predominantly seemed to focus on 'translating HQ's ideas into reality'. In order to make his voice heard and manage the implementation of HQ's ideas at AT, he engaged in struggles with ITR2 and tried to turn them into a win-win situation by appreciating ITR2's concerns and loyalty for ESAG, while at the same time trying to explain ESAG's demands. ITR2, on the other hand, tried to align ESAG's demands with his customers' wishes (*social capital*) and preferred behaviors (*cultural capital*). This left ITR2 somewhere in the middle and it may therefore have been important for him to position himself more clearly as the 'more knowledgeable player' (*symbolic capital*) on the ethnic market in comparison to IDK1. However, IDK1 was more powerful in terms of implementing his ideas. Not only did he have the authority as a leader (*symbolic capital*), he also had the advantage of being supported by a trusting head of sales (IDK0) and ESAG management in general. This perceived trust enabled IDK1 to

make decisions which could be perceived as being not agreed upon by HQ, yet did not seem to breach the confines of Freedom with Responsibility.

#### **5.3.4 IDK3: Young, rather inexperienced subsidiary leader who is willing to walk many extra miles**

IDK3 started at ESAG in a trainee position after finishing his commercial college education and his bachelor of commerce in 2008. Following the traineeship, during which he stayed 3 months at DE-E, IDK3 received a fulltime position at ESAG leading the sales personnel in the western part of Germany from his desk at HQ. Shortly after he became a fulltime employee at ESAG, the company decided in 2012 to set up a sales subsidiary in the western part of Germany where ESAG's main part of the ethnic food market was located. IDK3 was offered and accepted the position as subsidiary leader. In the beginning of 2013, he moved to the western part of Germany where he was put in charge of developing a sales subsidiary with an adjacent warehouse (ESAG News; no. 8; December 2015:3). In addition to the sales persons he had already worked with and had assisted during his trainee-ship while stationed in Denmark, he was put in charge of hiring a warehouse manager (ITR4), which he did shortly after finding a suitable location (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp: 00:15:01-00:15:50). Moreover, his girlfriend (IDK5), who also worked at ESAG, followed him to Germany where she took the position of sales support at DE-W. Thus, IDK3 managed and led 5 employees at DE-W (see figure 14) while being supported by HQ. Seeing that IDK4 held the position as managing director at ESAG-Germany, IDK3 considered him to be his superior. The relation between IDK3 and IDK4 is analyzed in section 5.3.6.

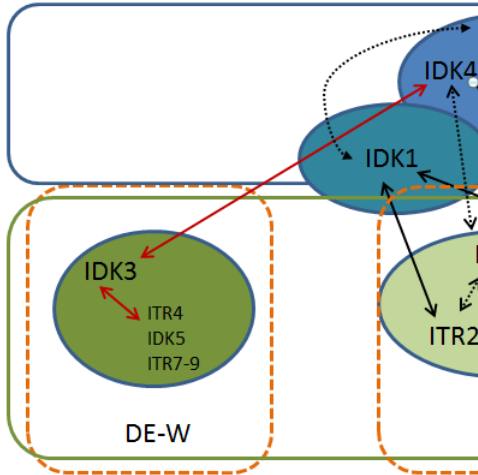


Figure 14: IDK3's leader-employee relations

Considering that IDK3 had worked at ESAG HQ for 4 years prior to his time as expatriate at DE-W, he had become familiar with ESAG's organizational culture and its practices and tacit logics. It could be argued that his promotion as subsidiary leader was a result of him knowing how to maneuver successfully in the field of ESAG. This assumption seems to be supported by IDK1's notion of "we believe that IDK3 has the abilities to fulfill his job" (Interview IDK1; June 2013; time stamp: 0:58:18.3 - 0:58:18.3). In his further account, IDK1 explained that ESAG was running a risk in employing "a fairly young man (IDK3)" as a subsidiary leader who was responsible for a warehouse, cars, and staff. This, so IDK1, showcased ESAG's trust in IDK3 and its confidence in him that he would do his best while being supported by HQ. In his further account, IDK1 once again pointed to the role of "freedom with responsibility" as the main logic which made it possible for ESAG to "run a business like this" (ibid.). IDK3 also pointed to the importance of "now that I know the sales persons better and know how they work; I have given them more freedom so that they can make decisions at the supermarkets independently and without having to ask me first" (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp:

00:43.30-00:44.12). Explaining further (ibid.), IDK3 stated that giving one's employees "scope to maneuver" may challenge them but also made them work more efficiently and effectively since they could make decisions immediately without having to wait for an answer. In line with IDK1 (see Section 5.3.1) and IDK4 (see Section 5.1.1), IDK3 seemed to understand the notion of "Freedom with Responsibility" as an 'enabler for action' which, however, seemed to rest on a certain amount of trust, i.e. on the other's perceived ability and integrity to reciprocate the trust placed in them by giving them a certain 'scope of freedom to judge whether certain sales practices are reasonable or not'. In order for his employees to know which rules applied and what he expected from his employees, he arguably took an 'involving leadership approach', as he explained that he considered the entire sales subsidiary a team whereby "we have to solve some problems and work together (...) and I am going to help you all the way (...) and if we cannot solve this issue, it is not you who suffers but it is us. It will harm all of us" (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp: 0:17:16-0:18:57). IDK3 furthermore pointed out that his approach to the employees could be characterized as being "companionable" due to his "daily contact with them over a long period of time" (ibid.). According to IDK3, it is "human contact" that enables a "fellowship" in which all want "to give a bit more to me", which IDK3 explained to be a sign of "trust" (ibid.). Furthermore, leading the subsidiary in a type of "companionable teamwork" resulted in seeing each other as colleagues and not as somebody higher or lower in the organizational hierarchy (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp: 0:46:00-0:47:03). Nevertheless, ESAG has a hierarchy, i.e. there are positions of more and of less power, as mentioned in Section 5.1. Having a 'flat hierarchy' and being 'tolerant', which included 'internal promotions and work opportunities', was portrayed as what I consider part of the field's *illusio* which, according to Wilken (2006:56), "enables the field's reproduction". To some extent, IDK3 seemed to reproduce precisely this *illusio* by referring to his leadership style as a copy of ESAG HQ's approach to leadership. He argued:

It's not like you have a hierarchy or so [at HQ]. Also, if I think about how I approach IDK4; I don't think of him as a boss, he's more a colleague to me. And that's how I think of all of them with the exception of the CEO. I have the impression that you can approach anyone in the company and you will get an answer from everybody. And that's precisely what I try to convey to the sales personnel. [Hmm] I mean the way in which .. Neither do I want them to see me as their - well, they consider me their boss – but they ought not to be afraid of me. I rather like to know if they have back pain, I rather like to know that. Well they should not hide these things just because I am their boss [hmm]. Yes, honesty; I think that's important. [Yes] and I do feel it present here and I also hope that it will continue to exist from the Danish side; that they are open to us and tell us right away if something happens. [Yes]. (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp: 0:46:00-0:47:03).

Following IDK3, he wishes to portray himself as the subsidiary leader whose primary role is to assist his employees and secure their well-being. In saying that he does not want his employees to hide unpleasant news or even be afraid of him, he arguably indicates that his employees were used to a more authoritative leadership style. This assumption seems to be supported by ITR8 who mentioned that IDK3 is very concerned about her well-being which she was not used to in her prior employment (Interview ITR8; April 2014; time stamp: 0:12:10.3-0:14:24.6). Furthermore, somewhat in line with ITR8, ITR9 stated that she prior to her position at ESAG had been working in Turkish associations (Interview ITR9; May 2013; time stamp: 0:05:18.2-0:06:02.2); both there and at her current work as sales person she experienced authoritarian leadership which seems to be rather 'normal' in the Turkish business segment. She said:

You have to be hard, especially in business. (...) To work with customers, that's simply a man's job. It's a man's world. (...) You have to be strong; you simply have to be cool (...) in order to be accepted. You have to be able to thumb the table. That's simply the way it is. (...) You have to prove yourself. (Interview ITR9; May 2013; time stamp: 0:22:15.8-0:25:26.8)

Following her statement, ethnic Turkish customers seem to expect the sales person to be a strong, authoritative negotiator who could push things forward. ITR4, the ware-house manager at DE-W, indicated as well that IDK3 employed a rather different leadership style from what he was used to. He mentioned that IDK3 would be his and the sales persons' superior and if IDK3 wanted to employ new ideas "he does not say "Boom [ITR4 thumbs the table], that's how we do things." He communicates with them [the sales personnel (ITR7-9)] in a very nice and friendly way pointing out that he would like to have this change because it would probably excel our sales in the future" (Interview with ITR4 and IDK3; September 2014; time stamp: 0:55:30.0-0:57:02.5). The warehouse manager (ITR4) and the two female sales persons ITR8 and ITR9 thus framed IDK3 as "nice, positive and caring" (Interview ITR9; May 2013; time stamp: 0:06:13.1-0:07:30.6) or "sweet-natured" (Interview ITR8; April 2014; time stamp: 0:03:18.0-0:04:45.4). Besides being concerned about his employees' wellbeing and a good working atmosphere, IDK3 is also characterized as loyal and hardworking (e.g., Interview ITR7; April 2014; time stamp: 0:10:26.1-0:12:24.8; Interview ITR4 and IDK3; September 2014; time stamp: 0:48:51.1-0:53:15.9).

In summary, it seemed that IDK3 achieved his position as subsidiary leader of DE-W for a variety of interconnected reasons: First, he seemed to have the relevant knowledge, skills and competencies (*cultural capital*) to take on the position of subsidiary leader. Second, he knew the *logics of the field of ESAG*, most importantly the ability to understand the work-philosophy of "Freedom with Responsibility". In combination, these aspects seem to indicate that IDK3 knew how to employ his *cultural capital* in such a way that it would make meaning in the *field of ESAG*, i.e. it was *recognized* as valued form of capital and thus converted into *symbolic capital*, i.e., a leadership position. Third, he could always be certain of support from HQ because of the aforementioned philosophy of "Freedom with Responsibility"; and fourth, he was trusted to be successful and perform his best at all times, i.e. ESAG perceived him to be trustworthy on the grounds of his perceived *abilities* and his *integrity*. In this sense, it could be suggested that IDK3 found himself in a position



to reciprocate the trust bestowed in him by HQ in order to signal that he had the abilities and the integrity to attain the position in the first place.

In the following I exemplify IDK3's relation to his employees by analyzing ITR4's background and activities as warehouse manager at DE-W. I decided to focus on ITR4 because he was newly hired and did not have had any prior experiences with IDK3. Nevertheless, as done in the previous paragraphs, the sales personnel's experiences and interpretations of trust will also be incorporated into the following sections.

### **5.3.5 ITR4: Eager, loyal and straight forward bi-cultural ware-house manager**

In May 2013 ITR4 started as warehouse manager at DE-W. Prior to that position he had been working as a mechanic with the American Air Force (Interview ITR4; May 2013; time stamp: 0:14:59.3-0:16:42.8) where he had experienced a somewhat different working atmosphere than at DE-W. He pointed out that his new position at ESAG was 'less stressful and controlling' than his prior employment where he felt to have much more responsibility. In general, ITR4 gave the impression that he understood any occupation primarily as a means of solid income (Interview ITR4; May 2013; time stamp: 0:06:28.4-0:07:10.3). Nevertheless, having a good working atmosphere and relationship to his superior played an important role to him as well. He pointed out that he would get his orders from IDK3 and that he would follow them; on the other hand, he also appreciated to have some freedom in his time management (ibid: time stamp: 0:08:49.2-0:09:36.3). Even though ITR4 considered IDK3 as his superior, he also spoke of him as a colleague (ibid: time stamp: 0:04:33.5-0:05:02.2), which seems to be in line with IDK3's statements mentioned earlier (see section 5.3.4). When I spoke with ITR4 a year later, he, IDK3 and IDK5 had become a tight and hardworking team which wanted DE-W to become a success (Interview ITR4 and IDK3 September 2014; time stamp: 0:04:07.6-0:05:14.4).

As a person, ITR4 described himself as lively and someone who needing challenges and not too many routines in life. He told me that he grew up in Germany and his strong dialect in his German language signaled his upbringing in a certain region in Germany. When I asked him about his cultural background, he stated (Interview ITR4; May 2013; time stamp: 0:17:02.3-0:18:10.8) “the way (art) to do this is to pick and choose and take the best of both cultures (...) when I combine all these aspects something wonderful emerges”, i.e. arguably a hybrid culture made up of bits and pieces of Turkish and German culture. This biculturalism influenced ITR4’s actions in a tacit way which he explained as follows:

When you grow up within this culture there is no way of saying: I live just like that or like that; no that doesn’t work [hmm]. You also simply stop thinking about it; you simply act [hmm]. It’s only if you really sit down and think about one’s actions or how one lives, well then you know at once: this is more German what I am doing right now, more following my German mentality [hmm] or you know, this here is more my Turkish side [hmm], but it’s all routine [snatches his fingers three times] it all [yes, you already] is deeply ingrained. (Interview ITR4; May 2013; time stamp: 0:18:20.6-0:18:57.0)

Following ITR4’s account, his biculturalism has become part of his way of being in the world. In other words, his experiences of living as an ethnic minority Turk in Germany has become part of his *cultural habitus* which influences his actions, perceptions and tastes. Having a *bicultural habitus* on the other hand equipped him with a certain *capital portfolio* which he drew from in order to realize his actions. For example, through his *bicultural background* he had the ability to make meaning of IDK3’s none-authoritarian leadership style while at the same time pointing out how this style would be perceived by ethnic Turkish employees identifying more with their Turkishness which I will present at the end of the following section.

### **5.3.6 ITR7, a key account manager who wants to be promoted, and ITR8 and ITR9 two sales persons who are content with their jobs**

As mentioned in section 5.2.1, ITR7 had moved to Germany in his teens and started to study marketing, yet had to give up his studies due to family issues. (Interview ITR7, April 2014; time stamp: 0:00:00.0-0:01:51.4). Similar to ITR4, ITR7 spoke fluent German, yet without a heavy dialect which arguably signified his higher educational level. In contrast to ITR8 and ITR9, explained ITR7 his function at DE-W in technical terms. He told me to work as key-account manager, dealing with “CRM, customer relation management” (ibid: time stamp: 0:01:51.4-0:05:14.7). In his view CRM of ethnic Turkish customers or key-accounts would ask for personal contact and someone who understands the Turkish business mentality which he explains to differ from the Danish. Seeing these differences, ITR7 claimed that ESAG’s economic success could to quite some extent be explained by having sales personnel of ethnic Turkish origin. He argued:

I am certain that having different cultures is part of the economic success [yes]. (...) I heard that already 15,20 years ago ESAG had tried to penetrate the German market [hmm] with Danish employees [hmm] and uhm that was a flop, that did not work out [yes]. This, I ascribe to cultural differences, uhm in comparison to the German, the Dane is straightforward: This is my product, this is the price and this is your due date for payment [hmm]: Do you want this product for this price? Do you pay on time? Our customer says: Yes, till he has received the goods and then it is not paid for or they try to influence the price somehow. And I think the Dane is unable to handle that [yes], because they are candid, they’ve been brought up like that [hmm]. 2 and 2 is 4. In the Turkish mindset, however, 2 and 2 does not make 4; sometimes it is 3 and sometimes 5. [yes] And here I think that we sales

managers, I think [3 sec pause] we play an important role for the company's success. (Interview ITR7; April 2014; time stamp: 0:25:38.6-0:29:13.3)

Following ITR7's account, the „Danish“ and the “ethnic Turkish market” seem to follow rather different rules of the game in terms of sales strategies and practices. As indicated in section 5.2, it seems to take ethnic Turkish personnel to grasp these rules and thus to penetrate the ethnic market. In other words, it could be argued that ESAG is only as successful as its sales personnel are managing to sell ESAG's goods according to the logics of the field of ethnic business.

Drawing on his *cultural capital* and his role and experiences as key-account manager, ITR7 pointed to many areas and practices of ESAG which he thought could be improved in order to enhance ESAG's overall economic success. Yet, he mentioned that he never was listened to from HQ; on the contrary, he had the impression of top-down management. In addition, he pointed out that he did not see any chance for him being promoted at ESAG (ibid: 0:30:54.7-0:32:08.9).

The aforementioned aspects influenced his trust in HQ. In regard to trust, he pointed out that he would not understand culture to influence trust; in his view, trust was a personal matter. Trust would develop over time and it is portrayed via entrusting him with a company car, a free time management without much control, and by letting him collect rather big amounts of money from the cash-customers (ibid: 0:05:27.7-0:06:47.3). This perceived trust was more than often reciprocated by ITR7; he pointed out that he would have a high level of conscientiousness which he understood to mirror his trust in ESAG (ibid: 0:08:30.1-0:10:12.2). Yet, the trust bestowed in him from HQ seemed to have a rather narrow scope, i.e. HQ seemed to trust him in having the abilities and tools to fulfill his role as key-account manager. ITR7 pointed out that his employer would trust him to do his work as a sales person but they would not trust him on his information he would share with them concerning the ethnic market (ibid: 0:32:34.7-0:34:18.4). To be listened to, to be taken seriously and to be recognized and awarded for his work seemed to be important for ITR7. Since, according to him, HQ did not take him seriously and

even broke promises made to him, he lost trust in ESAG HQs which resulted in a feeling of demotivation. As mentioned in section 5.2.1, ITR7 left ESAG in December 2015.

ITR8 and ITR9 did not have an academic background but both had many years of experience as sales persons in the ethnic market (Interview ITR8; April 2014; time span: 0:01:37.0-0:02:32.7). In line with ITR7 they pointed to the importance of having ethnic Turkish sales personnel in order to enhance sales. Yet, while ITR9 stressed the importance of cultural understanding (*cultural capital*) as means to foster ESAG's success on the ethnic market, (Interview ITR9; May 2013; time stamp: 0:08:42.9-0:10:03.3; Interview ITR9; April 2014; time stamp: 0:05:20.0-0:07:31.0), ITR8 pointed to the importance of her close ties to the customers (*social capital*) as significant for ESAG's further success. ITR8 emphasized that trust between the sales person and customer was essential for the sales person to land a new brand in the market seeing that, according to ITR8, the customer would trust the new brand because it was she who recommended it (Interview ITR8; April 2014; time stamp: 0:01:37.0-0:02:32.7).

Regarding trust building in general, ITR8 pointed out that she would start any relation from a rather high level of trust (0:04:45.4-0:07:25.5) and it would take somebody lying to her before she would lose her trust in him or her. Another reason for her to withdraw her trust would be if someone had been badmouthing her. However, she stressed that she would need proof for this action, simply telling her or overhearing this from a third person would not be enough for her to withdraw her trust, ITR8 said. Furthermore, ITR8 indicated that she would forgive people in cases where she could understand their untrustworthy actions. She said:

Concerning material things, my trust is hard to breach, if it is about money or so, no that doesn't break my trust. Well, it depends on what is behind this action; if there is a good reason for this behavior which doesn't indicate that the person is a bad human being, then that's okay. Perhaps this person has private or business-related issues and does not want to talk about it and that's

why this person acts in this way. I am always tolerant. But if this behavior continues in the future then I ask the person if he or she has a problem with me. But I don't put someone down, I always try to speak with them first. (Interview ITR8; April 2014; time stamp: 0:08:00.9-0:10:42.2)

According to ITR8, being lied to destroys trust; yet being cheated for money or other material goods seems not automatically lead to her withdrawing her trust. It could be argued that trust is not lost when the situation or the 'power relations in the field' make a good social actor act in a negative way. In that sense, ITR8 seems to perceive trust in line with a moral obligation which possibly is confirmed in her notion of "I always give a second chance because I am a very religious person and God too gives us a second chance" (Interview ITR8; April 2014; time stamp: 0:17:26.6-0:18:43.2)

ITR9, on the other hand, seemed to approach trust with more caution. She considered trust to be something that has to be built up over time. It would take small steps and if one would not experience negative things, trust can be built. (Interview ITR9; May 2013; time stamp: 0:13:00.0-0:15:15.5). In her view, trust can emerge when a person stays authentic and does not have a "second face". Therefore, according to her, it would not matter if the person would say something negative to her in a face-to-face conversation. Yet, similar to ITR8, she would consider it a breach of trust if a given person would talk bad about her behind her back (Interview ITR9; April 2014; time stamp: 0:10:12.6-0:12:36.5). She mentioned that she would consider people to be trustworthy if they had no hidden agenda, no 'second face', would be authentic and not playing a role (ibid: 0:12:44.1 -0:15:55.1). In addition, she pointed to the importance of being listened to in order to maintain a trust-based relation. Quite similar to ITR7, she pointed out that her experience and skills would be important for ESAG and sometimes when HQs did not listen to her, it would hurt her, especially when she then could see that a certain decision from HQ would harm the company (ibid: 0:26:07.1-0:28:28.3).

In the following section, the sales persons' and warehouse manager's experiences of trust with their leader IDK3 are analyzed. Seeing that IDK5 is IDK3's girlfriend, I decided to not analyzing her relation with IDK3.

***Experiences of trust in IDK3's relation with ITR4 and his sales personnel ITR7, ITR8 and ITR9***

The abovementioned interpretations of trust showcase the different levels on which IDK3 and his employees would start a relation. While ITR8 expressed to commence any relation from a trusting perspective, IDK3 seemed to take a similar approach, yet, in case of work-relations he mentioned also to administer some control before enhancing the scope of freedom with responsibility. In case of his employees he explained the trust-building process as something that takes time. Taking ITR4 as an example, he stated that in the beginning of a relation, he

would work closely together with him and would inform him about his work tasks and the way we work here. In doing so, trust will emerge. (...) Once they [employees in general] can show that they are able to tackle their tasks and work independently, well then I will give them more freedom to fulfill their tasks in the way they see fit. (...); that's how trust emerges and also if they show they can be relied upon both at work and privately (Interview IDK3; FRA May 2014; time stamp: 0:35:29.4-0:35:52.6)

According to IDK3, he trusts his staff and built this trust over time based on the staffs' actions in regard to working tasks and private issues. Concerning the first and following steps of a new relationship with unfamiliar employees, IDK3 stressed that he would inform them, assist them and support them. This, so IDK3, should however not be experienced as control from the employees' perspective but rather as trust. In relation to ITR4, he mentioned that subtle control rather than "always watching the other closely [kigge over nakken]" would make ITR4 feel "more respected or being valued" (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp: (0:48:43-0:49:54) which in turn would also enhance the employees' motivation (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp: 0:44:16-0:44:34). As mentioned earlier (see section

5.3.4), IDK3 arguably followed a leadership style similar to what he was used when stationed at ESAG HQ. The main element seemed to be the notion of working and leading within the confines of freedom with responsibility which arguably was characterized by providing assistance, coaching and support, executing subtle control and trusting in the employees' ability to fulfill their tasks. In order to enable the employees to fulfill their tasks, IDK3 provided them with the tools needed. Besides providing them with the cars, smart-phones, and so on, he initiated internal sales meetings in order for information and knowledge to be shared across the sales persons since they would not meet each other very often (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp: 0:27:13-0:28:23). In addition, he pointed out that his employees' private lives and backgrounds were very different which gave them a different outlook on life (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp: 0:24:20-0:25:55). Therefore, he would also adjust his leadership style accordingly (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp 00.26.09-00.26.52). He stated:

Of course it is a good thing to have it [educational background as bachelor of commerce] all these things. And it's good enough to know that, but everyday life is quite different [yes]. It is rather more knowledge of human nature and stuff like that I have to use [hmm] instead of all these technical expressions. Those I cannot use for anything. Actually it's like that over time I have gotten to know these sales persons so well that I know she wants to be treated like this and he like that. (Interview IDK3; May 2013; time stamp: 0:16:00-0:16:57)

Following his account, though he could draw on his academic knowledge to establish the sales subsidiary and lead his employees, his reality would influence which tools would be feasible to use and how they could be applied. In addition, he realized that he had to draw on his knowledge of human nature rather than his academic knowledge. It could be argued that relevant *institutionalized cultural capital* provided him with relevant knowledge and the key to get a certain position. Yet this form of capital did not really assist him to fulfil his tasks as outlined by HQ. Rather he had to draw on his abilities to build up human relations (*social capital*)



and establish trust-based interactions with his employees which he arguably managed to do by adjusting his interaction style according to the needs and preferences of the individual employee. In that sense, it could be argued that the specific relation drives which form and species of capital he can use to establish trust. In the following I present how IDK3's employees perceived their relation to IDK3 in terms of trust.

All employees pointed out that they trusted IDK3. Yet, in their interviews they stated different reasons for why they build up a high level of trust in their relation to IDK3. ITR8 and ITR9, the two female sales persons, pointed to the notion of IDK3 being a 'good human being' who would be open, listening and caring (ITR8: April 2014; time stamp: 0:02:41.0-0:03:07.4; Interview ITR9; April 2014; time stamp: 0:12:44.1 -0:15:55.1). These aspects, ITR8 and ITR9 claimed, could be seen in IDK3's eyes. Both sales persons expressed that they found IDK3's face, eyes, his way of greeting and his entire body language to signal trustworthiness (ibid.). Even though ITR9 explained to engage in new relations in a rather skeptical way, she had a very positive feeling about IDK3 and "took him to her heart" from the first moment they met (Interview ITR9; April 2014; time stamp: 0:12:44.1 -0:15:55.1). As indicated earlier, ITR8 and ITR9 understood honesty and continuous positive experiences with the other as trust-building and maintaining aspects. In relation to IDK3, they pointed out that IDK3 always would keep his word, would be frank and honest and not having a second agenda (Interview ITR8; April 2014; time stamp: 0:11:02.6-0:12:10.3; Interview ITR9; April 2014; time stamp: 0:12:44.1 -0:15:55.1). In sum, it could be argued that ITR8 and ITR9 trusted IDK3 because they believed in his benevolence.

Somewhat in contrast to ITR8 and ITR9 did ITR7 and ITR4 build trust in light of IDK3's abilities to 'fight for the subsidiary' success'. ITR7 (Interview ITR7; April 2014; time stamp: 0:10:26.1-0:12:24.8) mentioned that IDK3 and he would "fight to get the best out of our goods" which I also could observe at the subsidiary where all employees tried to use their *social capital*, i.e. their family and customer networks to sell some chocolate which HQ thought to be sellable which however turned out to

not fit the ethnic market in Germany (Field notes: Observation DE-W, April/May 2014; page 2). In that sense, all employees drew on their social capital to minimize ESAG's financial losses on the 'chocolate project'. When asked about his trust in IDK3, ITR7 mentioned to have built his trust by fulfilling his role as key-account manager in the best possible way. He would be honest, fulfill his duties, and be loyal to the company (Interview ITR7; April 2014; time stamp: 0:12:43.6-0:15:32.3). It seems that ITR7 primarily built trust based on perceived *ability* and *integrity*. An important aspect which tightened his trust in IDK3, however, was that he would not have to fear any repercussions when he engaged in critical discussions with IDK3. ITR7 said:

I told him in an open and honest manner: That's how it looks like, this is my opinion and perhaps we should do it like this. [hmm] You can sack me now because of my opinion, but it's the truth, well at least what I think is the truth [yes, yes]. This kind of frankness, I think, consolidated our trust in each other. (Interview ITR7; April 2014; time stamp: 0:12:43.6-0:15:32.3).

According to ITR7, he dared to engage in a critical discussion with his superior despite the chance of losing his employment. Thus, he arguably already must have had established some trust in IDK3 which was further consolidated because IDK3 listened to ITR7 and did not perceive constructive critique as negative. On the contrary, as mentioned earlier, IDK3 established internal sales meetings at DE-W in order to learn about the ethnic market and build a platform where the sales persons could share their ideas and raise concerns. ITR7 furthermore argued that he had a "feeling of trust" towards IDK3 and since IDK3 did not breach his trust and would be "respectable", he perceived IDK3 more as a friend which would enhance his trust in him even more (Interview ITR7; April 2014; time stamp: 0:12:43.6-0:15:32.3).

ITR4, the warehouse manager at DE-W, arguably build his trust in quite the same way as ITR7. For example, he also pointed to the importance of being listened to and being supported as grounds for a good collaboration which would enhance mutual respect (Interview ITR4; May 2013; time stamp: 0:05:09.3-0:05:47.1). In

line with ITR7, he pointed out that trust could be built by “paying attention” to the other and “considering the other’s suggestions and ideas” as well as honoring none-work-related activities which however would save the company some money (Interview ITR4 and IDK3; September 2014; time stamp: 0:10:53.0-0:11:33.6). Arguably, these notions point to the importance of being respected and honored in some sense which could be said to foster a person’s *symbolic capital* in form of being recognized as a valuable employee who shows organizational commitment. In regard to trust building, ITR4 stresses the importance of direct face-to-face contact both at and outside work because only in that way one would get to know the ‘whole person’ and trust could be reciprocated. ITR4 mentioned:

Trust is when people know about my good deeds and my bad sides on a private basis. [and] I do know IDK3 on a private basis as well, know him as a human being (...) and I have seen him performing good deeds and he helped me no matter what and that is reciprocal; I do also help him out or IDK5. (...) and here you can talk about trust. Between me, IDK3 and IDK5 there is trust. We are mutually committed to each other [hmm] at least concerning the work [hmm] yes? [ITR4 turns to IDK3 who nods] yes [IDK3: yes]. That’s how I see it. (Interview ITR4 and IDK3; September 2014; time stamp: 0:06:31.9-0:09:50.0)

Following ITR4’s account, he understands trust only to be possible if one has personal and private connections and knowledge about the other. Trust seems to be related to knowing about ‘the whole person’ including the good and bad sides. In addition trust is understood to be reciprocated. In that sense, being recognized and valued for one’s actions is understood to foster trust. A decisive factor for trust however was intensified cooperation towards reaching a common goal. According to ITR4 he and IDK3 have been struggling together to keep the subsidiary running which has resulted in a high level of trust built on mutual identification (Interview ITR4 and IDK3 September 2014; time stamp: 0:04:07.6-0:05:14.4). As mentioned elsewhere, this mutual identification seemed to be triggered by a raising distrust to

HQ which I already hinted at in section 5.1 and 5.2 and therefore only present briefly.

### ***Experiences of trust in IDK3's and De-W's relation to HQ***

As mentioned earlier, ITR7 perceived HQ to trust him with his work-related tasks, yet, to refuse to trust his knowledge of the ethnic market which he pointed out to HQs when sharing information with them regarding the workings of the ethnic market. The reluctance of HQ to listen to the subsidiary employees' information and to incorporate their cultural knowledge (cultural capital) in ESAG's marketing and sales strategies became visible during a Monday meeting, which I already presented in section 5.2.1. During this meeting, it became apparent that HQ decisions were made without taking the sales persons' information about the market seriously. HQ's reaction resulted in the sales personnel's' withdrawal of knowledge sharing and left IDK3 in a situation where he felt rather disheartened (Field notes: Observation DE-W, April/May 2014; page 3-4). During this meeting it became apparent that HQ's reaction was interpreted as caused by a lack of contextual knowledge (ITR9 spoke of "they are not looking at us face-to-face"; *ibid*: page 4, first line). ITR4 made a similar notion in regard to HQ not knowing what it would mean to work in a sales subsidiary such as DE-W (Interview ITR4 and IDK3 September 2014; time stamp: 0:04:07.6-0:05:14.4). IDK3 expressed similar concerns when indicating that HQ did not grasp their situation (*ibid*: 0:12:50.4-0:14:01.3). In addition, IDK3 pointed out that he would wish for more direct face-to-face contact and interest from HQ in DE-W (*ibid*: 0:14:11.3-0:14:55.2). Instead, he felt that he had to tackle tasks which were not part of his contract and actually had to be fulfilled by HQ (Interviews: IDK3; FRA May 2014; time stamp: Interview 0:34:57.6-0:35:29.4). Yet, perhaps the most important factor influencing his trust in HQs negatively was that IDK3 got the impression that HQ reneged on its promise to support DE-W in the best possible way. In other words, the entire staff at DE-W felt let down and unfairly treated. This feeling of 'injustice' arguably led to enhanced mutual identification of the entire DE-W staff which positioned itself somewhat opposite to HQs at least in regard to how they would treat their competitors which ITR9 expressed as "we are not a

hostile company. We treat others with respect” (Field notes: Observation DE-W, April/May 2014; page 4). Based on the above statements the staff at DE-W seemed to have developed identification-based trust.

In summary, these two mutually reinforcing process of trusting may look as follows:

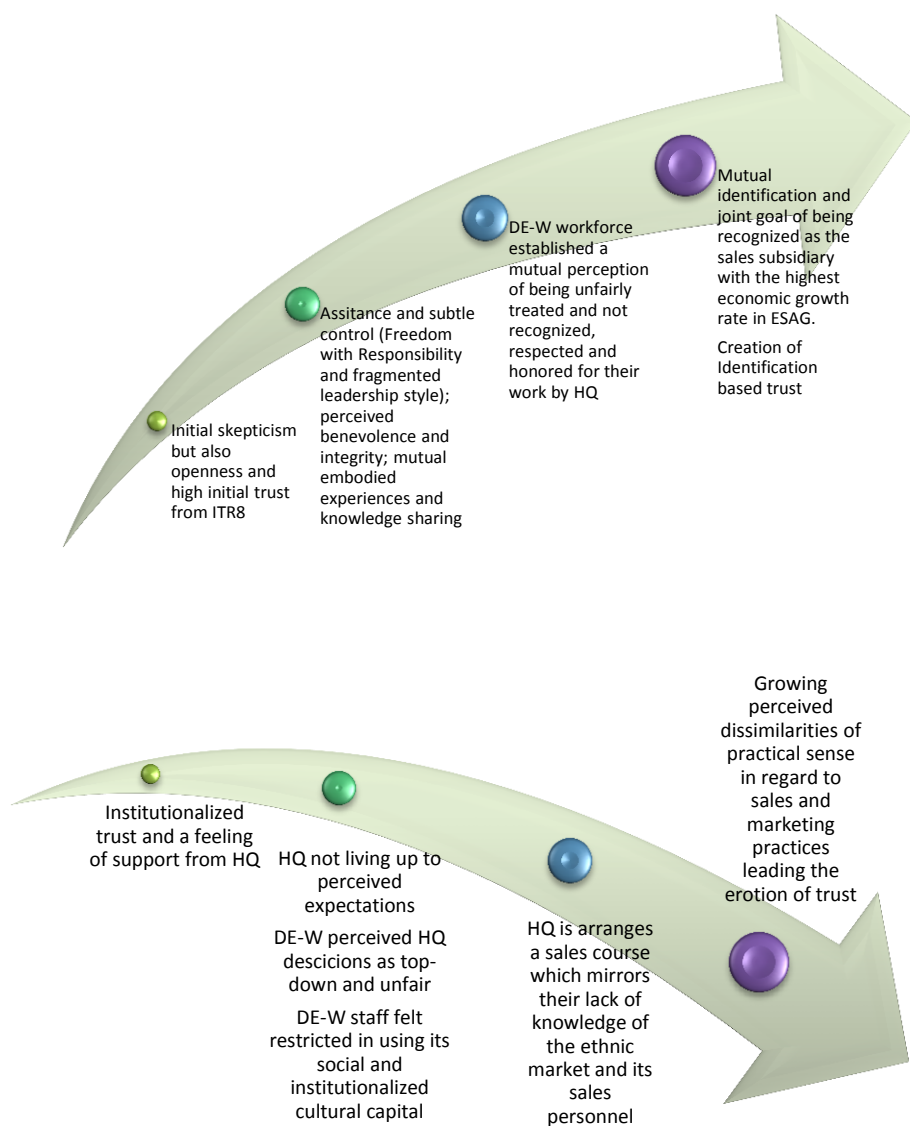


Figure 15: The processes of trusting between IDK3 and his staff at DE-W in conjunction with DE-W's relation to HQ

In short, openness and honest interest in the other and his/her everyday parred with extended mutual experiences in the field of Ethnic Sales seemingly fostered trust between IDK3 and his employees at DE-W. This trust was apparently further consolidated by some HQ decisions which all members of DE-W perceived as 'incorrect and unfair' and possibly mirroring a disinterest or even ignorance in regard to the subsidiary staff's situation. As argued, the sales person's and subsidiary leader's perception of 'not being listened to' and 'not being involved' seemed to be perceived as 'not being recognized as knowledgeable actor on the Ethnic market'. Due to perceived malevolence from the side of HQs, IDK3's relation to his employees at DE-W seemingly reached the level of identification-based trust, while at the same time his trusting relation to HQs with IDK4 as his direct superior turned into a relation in which trust was absent and not needed in order to continue the collaboration for the sake of the company.

#### **5.4 Continued misalignment of logics and cultural othering as hampering trust**

But there is this huge difference between them [the ethnic Turkish employees]. ITR10 doesn't have this proudness at all; it's not that high as in many others of our employees of the same culture. In that sense, he is much more Austrian. He himself says that's because he's been very sick and close to dying, that this changed his perspective; he doesn't get carried away with trivialities; he has a different view of life and this seems to have shuttered his proudness, I think. Whereas ITR6 and ITR14 are really proud; as soon as they feel that one perhaps doesn't really understand them, they seal themselves off a bit. And there has been a lot going on at DE-E lately with internal conflicts and such things, that's a bit difficult. (Interview IDK1; January 2015; time stamp: 0:38:31.5-0:40:13.1)

In the previous sections, I described in what ways IDK1 and IDK3 employed leadership to adjust to or bridge the perceived and experienced differences between HQ and the sales subsidiaries. I argued that they employed a ‘fragmented leadership style’ to convert HQ policies and practices to what they called ‘the reality’, i.e. the sales subsidiaries immersed in the field of ethnic sales. In so doing, IDK1 and IDK3 arguably managed to construct a joint understanding of how HQ’s expectations were to be put into practice by the sales personnel. As previously mentioned, while ITR1 and the sales staff at DE-W generally did accept IDK1’s and IDK3’s suggestions and ‘orders’ respectively, ITR2 often took the side of his customers and would thus challenge the suggested directives from IDK1. ITR2’s identification with his customers seemingly led to a variety of struggles over what could be called best practice on the ethnic market or, to follow Bourdieu, they struggled over the *rules of the game* and thus also over their influence in changing these rules. In the case of DE-W, the entire staff seemed to struggle over these rules in relation to HQ. While DE-W’s struggles led to diminished trust in HQ, IDK1 and ITR2 managed to resolve them on both sides by discussing the other’s perspective and thus experienced each other’s way of thinking. Arguably, as postulated in Section 5.3, these struggles enabled trusting because of their ability to learn from each other’s experiences and thus enhance familiarity with each other. As pointed out in section 5.2.3, IDK2 seemed to struggle with her employees over how to work in the most efficient manner, which she expressed along the lines of ‘speaking the same language, using IT whenever possible, and not exploiting ESAG’s notion of working within the confines of Freedom with Responsibility’. The latter represented a serious struggle between her (IDK2) and ITR5, a trainee with Turkish roots who grew up in Denmark and started his traineeship at HQ’s department of sales support. Whereas IDK1 seemed to manage mediating between ESAG HQ and both his and the sales persons’ preferred ways of working towards ESAG’s business goals, IDK2 seemed to struggle with this issue, especially when employees with Turkish heritage seemed to express ‘pride’ or what she considered to be mirroring a ‘proud attitude’, as indicated in the quote above. In that quote, IDK2 also mentioned that ITR10 no longer ‘focused on trivialities’, which seems to refer to ‘proudness’. Perhaps IDK2



considered ‘showing proudness or being proud’ a ‘triviality’ which was no longer important for ITR10. It could be argued that IDK2 may have been implying that being ‘proud of oneself’ was a typical cultural trait of ethnic Turkish employees and that whenever it is ‘practiced’ cooperation becomes difficult. It could also be argued though that what IDK2 understood as ‘proudness’ and seemingly assumed to be a cultural trait, could rather be explained as a struggle for recognition; a struggle of the ethnic minority Turks to be respected in terms of their culture, education, and life experiences. As ESAG’s ethnic Turkish workforce represents an ethnic minority not only within ESAG but also within their host country societies, i.e. Austria, Germany and Denmark, this struggle for recognition seems to address at least two levels: recognition within ESAG and within the Austrian, German and Danish societies. I will describe and analyze these and further issues during the presentation of **Finding 4: Continued misalignment of logics and cultural othering present major barriers for trust.**

In this section, I explore the sales support manager’s (IDK2) relationships to two co-workers with Turkish backgrounds, one of whom worked at the Austrian sales subsidiary AT (ITR10) and one employee (ITR5) who started as a trainee in the department of sales support at HQ (see figure 16 below). The analysis will show that IDK2’s relationships differed greatly in terms of trust and this section identifies possible reasons for these differences. I point out how intensive identification with the “Other” seems to lead to trust, while shifting attitudes of the same sales support manager towards a Danish trainee with a Turkish background seems to have led to distrust through episodes of “Othering” (Rawls & David 2006), which arguably revolved around the notions of ‘efficiency’ and ‘proudness’. In addition, this section points out how aspects of familiarity in terms of language, situation, and identification with the “Other” influence trust building. The empirical material illustrates how combinations of cultural and organizational structures, including the understanding of organizational rules and role-relationships, seem to influence the situated identification of the “Other”, which eventually seems to effect trusting.

By drawing on observational and interview data, I demonstrate the shift in IDK2's attitude as being influenced by a combination of cross-cultural experiences made in the past, an implicit understanding of the company culture, her attitude towards non-Danes showing 'proudness', her own work-related role, and the situated practices taking place within the sales support department. During the case study, I met and talked with the followers with Turkish backgrounds and the Danish sales support manager on several occasions, both in work-related formal meetings and in more informal settings. Including both sets of data helps to understand the relationship between the Danish leader and her non-Danish followers, while simultaneously assisting to identify the broader cultural and situational factors and their influence on changes in the foundations of trust as well as changes in the social actors' identities. In addition, the qualitative data demonstrate the linkage between the Danish leader's practices and HQ's overall implicit directives. Predominantly, the analysis of the empirical material from IDK2's leader-employee relationships suggests an underlying aversion towards employees who do not comply with the unwritten rules of the company and who fail to 'fit in' as they seemingly exercise misplaced pride, which in her eyes hampers efficiency. The following figure provides a brief overview on the relations in question.

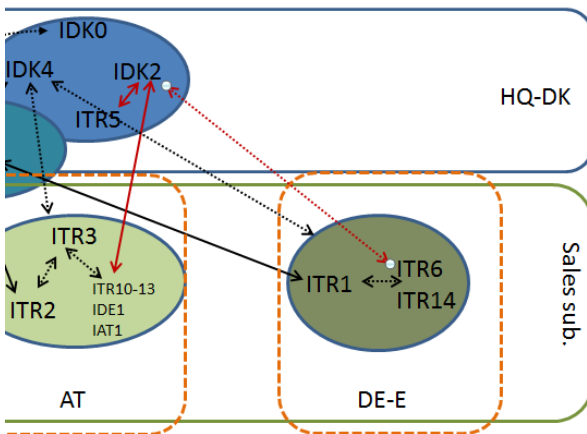


Figure: 16: Overview on IDK2's leader-employee relations (solid red lines)

#### **5.4.1 IDK2: Efficient and professional with a focus on motivation**

At the time of this study, IDK2 was the leader of the so-called sales support department at HQ where she was responsible for 15 employees (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:00:45.0 - 0:03:46.1). Prior to that position, she worked in several of ESAG's departments: 9 years in accounting, 9 years in the logistics department, 3 years in ethnic sales and the last 2 years in sales support, which she developed and which had not previously existed (ibid; 0:35:39.3-0:36:21.8). Thus, she has had experience of all sales support tasks during those 21 years at ESAG, which she used to re-model the entire structure concerning sales support in 2011. Her thoughts on how to make sales support more efficient resulted in the structure I observed at the time of this research (ibid; time stamp: 0:06:32.5-0:06:58.1). In IDK2's words, the new structure resulted in more streamlined practices, less redundant work, more motivation since all employees had to be able to work with all aspects of sales support, less dependency on individual employees and thus the erosion of the idea of being indispensable (ibid. time stamp: 0:06:32.5-0:08:47.4). An important tool in her work was a software program (Axapta) with which she seemed to be extremely familiar and which was why she was the one to instruct the subsidiary employees at DE-E and AT in its correct use, i.e. in the same way as at HQ. In addition to having been in face-to-face contact during the 'Axapta-course', she was in contact with all three sales subsidiaries on a daily basis, whereby her main contact persons were ITR6 at DE-E and ITR10 at AT (see figure 16).

IDK2 pointed out that almost all her employees at the subsidiaries were ethnic Turks and Muslims; yet, despite that, she had often thought about how different they were in terms of collaborating. She explained:

I often think about how different they are. At DE-E there are ITR6 and ITR14 and both are real Muslims, wearing head-scarves and ITR6 prays every day and on Fridays at noon she joins the Friday prayer at the local

mosque and sometimes it seems that she doesn't really understand her colleagues, who are not that religious as she is. But we really collaborate well with each other and I cannot really feel that they have another culture; they are so easy to work with; they really accept ESAG and everything is done in the right way. They do not question many things and they are not that moneygrubbing. But at AT they do a lot of double-checking (...) and they have distributed their work tasks and no one wants to work with the others' tasks. That's a work mode I would not like to work under if I had anything to say. And then the issues we had with them in order to link them to Axapta. This negative attitudes. (...) There is something going on there which I think is related to their culture and religious beliefs. (...) For example, if we say we cannot deliver the goods, they [DE-E] believe us and say, we up here have taken the right decision in terms of who should get the produced goods. But in Austria there is often a lot of fighting: "Well, how can that be and why?" They seem to always be in need of an explanation. (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:11:49.5-0:19:45.2 and 0:24:16.2 - 0:24:54)

In my understanding, this quote not only visualizes in what ways IDK2 perceived DE-E to be different from AT but also seems to picture IDK2's understanding of how culture may influence cooperation. During IDK2's explanation of her collaborations with DE-E and AT, she proposed that differences in culture and religion did not hamper her collaboration with ITR6 and ITR14 at DE-E. Following her account, her good collaboration was founded on ITR6 and ITR14's attitude of not asking too many questions and in general believing in HQ-decisions. In other words, employees at DE-E fulfilled the tasks they were given and did not challenge IDK2's or HQ's directives, which IDK2 arguably experienced as 'trust'. However, it could also be argued that in this case, all employees, including the leaders, accepted their positions. IDK2's experience with regards to DE-E furthermore seems to be consistent with IDK1's experience with ITR1, the main sales person at DE-E (see Section 5.3). Nevertheless, even though IDK2's collaboration with DE-E's employees seems to have been less troublesome than that with AT, IDK2 pointed

out that she considered ITR6 and, in fact, all employees of Turkish origin to be somewhat “honor-seeking or struggling for self-aggrandizement (ærekær)” (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:36:21.8-0:38:53.4). According to IDK2, she had this impression because ITR14 needed to call her repeatedly in order to use Axapta correctly because ITR6 had not taught her well enough. IDK2 reckoned that ITR14 was not supposed to be as good as ITR6, which according to IDK2 is a general issue within Turkish culture. Therefore, IDK2 reasoned that, ultimately, Turks are not that good at knowledge-sharing because they want to be irreplaceable. Obviously, as mentioned above, such an approach does not harmonize with IDK2’s desire for efficiency and her approach of teaching all her employees every function of sales support so that they could fill in for each other if necessary. The notion of having an honor-seeking attitude seems to be in tune with IDK2’s idea that ethnic Turks seem to have a certain ‘proudness’, as mentioned in the quote at the beginning of this chapter. This experience seems to be consistent with ITR2’s notion of being and showing ‘self-confidence’ (see Section 5.3.3). It could be that what IDK2 experienced as ‘pride’ or, to use a rather negative expression, ‘self-aggrandizement’ refers to the ethnic minority Turks’ situation as employees and residents with a migration background living and working in Austria and Germany. As hinted at earlier, ethnic minorities seem to struggle for recognition in several ways. Firstly, within ESAG they seem to struggle to be fully accepted, i.e. promoted on the same terms as their fellow ethnic Danish co-workers. Secondly, they struggle to be accepted as a fully-fledged citizen of their host countries.

In terms of the promotion and employment of ethnic minorities at ESAG, it could furthermore be argued that ethnic minority Turks struggle for employment in general, considering that their unemployment rate exceeds that of the ethnic majorities in Austria and Germany (Kahanec et al. 2010), as mentioned earlier. Moreover, as stated by Pütz et al. (2007:501), ethnic minority Turks seem to be ‘reduced’ to simply being Turks in spite of the fact that many of them identify with both their Turkish and host-country cultures simultaneously; thus, their self-understanding is arguably ‘reduced’ to fit the ethnic majority’s stereotypical

conception of a 'Turk'. In other words, ITR6's and the other ethnic minority employees' struggles for respect in their roles and/or positions and their fight for not being reduced to simply any employee might be triggered by the overall struggle for identification and acceptance as a fully-fledged member of society.

In general, IDK2 perceived culture to not play a critical role in her leadership practices as long as her employees followed her lead and worked as expected; this notion may arguably mirror efficiency. However, whenever she experienced her leadership to be difficult or even resembling a fight she held cultural differences responsible for these issues, as mentioned in the quote above. Nevertheless, she stated that she would have to accept these struggles because ESAG's top management had decided to hire 'Turks' and she would, of course, respect Turkish culture even though it caused her some difficulties because: "one shouldn't simply think that we are the right ones and they are wrong" (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:49:36.8-0:50:23.5). Nevertheless, HQ personnel, including IDK2, held the power to decide what should be considered 'right or wrong'. In the case of IDK2, any work practice she considered to be inefficient was to be abolished, such as the above-mentioned use of pencil and paper. According to IDK2, this did not make sense as a computers were available and would furthermore enhance overall transparency (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:38:06.8-1:48:36.3). Yet, at the same time she realized that her criticism of ITR6's preferred working style was relevant regarding ITR6's trust in her, which she claimed had been eroded due to unfortunate leadership practices by her, but also by her colleagues. The perceived erosion of trust between IDK2 and ITR6 is further analyzed below. Following IDK2's account, misinterpreted yet well-meaning leadership seems to have negatively influenced her relationship with ITR6.

With regards to leadership, IDK2 did not point out exactly how she interacted with her employees and what she understood to be her main tasks. Yet, based on my observations at the sales support department and the interviews conducted with IDK2, it seems that she primarily understood her role as being the advocate for 'efficiency at work', which included the prominent task of ensuring all employees

properly and transparently used the Axapta software. As the driving force behind the restructuring of sales support functions, she became the company's Axapta expert. In that role, she offered support and assistance to all employees with questions related to the program's functions and proper use. All subsidiary employees stated that she assisted them whenever they needed help. Moreover, IDK2 was perceived to be friendly and nice, which may mirror her main interests which, according to her, are soft values such as "motivation and well-being" (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:54:24.6-1:58:41.1). Concerning these 'soft values', IDK2 stated that she most likely got the job as department leader because she was interested in these soft values, although she also had to fight to get them accepted as being important at ESAG (ibid.). As she was the only female leader at HQ, she may have had the impression that she had to balance the focus on arguably 'female' soft values with a seemingly more 'masculine' focus on efficiency. In any case, she argued that the restructuring of sales support resulted in more motivated employees (Interview; IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:04:00.8 - 0:06:25.1 and 0:30:36.8-0:33:06.0) and enhanced efficiency and transparency. Nevertheless, as mentioned in Section 5.2.3, these changes were understood differently at the subsidiary level, leading to some struggles. Regarding struggles and conflicts, IDK2 perceived that the leader should play a conflict resolving role. However, she also mentioned that if a conflict between individual employees should persist, then the leader should withdraw because "the parties have to learn that it is their responsibility alone to solve the conflict as the aim of any department staff is to work together efficiently" (Interview/Field notes; IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:38:06.8-1:48:36.3). This implies that IDK2 expected her staff to be loyal to their role as employees at ESAG rather than letting their individual characteristics interfere with their work. As mentioned in Section 5.1.1, IDK2's statement seems to substantiate my argument that even though ESAG presents itself as a family business with a focus on relationships and freedom, it also very much focuses on its employees not letting their human side interfere with business and thus their role in the company. This arguably shines through in the use of the 'machine-room' metaphor, which was used in particular regarding IDK2's department of sales support. In other words, IDK2's

notion of efficiency seems to imply that she expected her staff to work according to their roles and those rules and work practices she deemed most efficient, which in turn might have made her employees' actions more aligned, streamlined and predictable. It could be argued that her leadership primarily concerned making the parts in her 'machine-room' fit each other to enhance their overall functioning, which she expressed as also enhancing her staff's motivation. My observational data seem to substantiate this, as IDK2 is very often asked for assistance and she is dependent on decisions taken by co-workers, as the following excerpt from my field notes illustrates:

13:40: Four people stand in the office and talk about an order which they need to have accounted by 14:00. However, IDK2 still has to wait for a decision from IDK1. She goes over to the department of ethnic sales and asks them to hurry up. IDK1 says: "Well, yes I still have the people to pay for it." Thus, many practices depend on each other and so do the people working with it. The co-worker from accountancy leaves the office again. Co-workers speed up, which is visible as they walk much faster now and the typing is faster as well. IDK2 still speaks in a very friendly voice. (Field notes; Sales Support; January 2015; page 3)

The above passage not only indicates that practices are intertwined and that therefore staff from ethnic sales, accountancy and sales support have to function together and depend on each other's work practices and role fulfillment. It also becomes clear that IDK2 and her co-workers do not appear to get easily stressed and do not lose their temper, something that IDK2 found especially inappropriate in ITR3's leadership style as it had a negative influence on the staff (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:02:43.8-1:06:15.4).

Not only work processes were interpreted as being intertwined; IDK2 furthermore indicated that she understood some work practices to influence trust processes between certain persons, which in turn might influence these persons' wider organizational networks. She described an issue at ESAG's "detail department",



which deals with detail businesses. Here, some goods could not be sold and so had to be destroyed. Instead of having the loss figured at the “detail department” at HQ, the head of that department decided that the Austrian subsidiary should take the loss. However, this decision was not communicated to them. IDK2 said:

And then I think: Fine, if that’s what (name of head of “detail department”) has decided, then that’s how it is. But then I ask him to communicate this decision to them, and this he simply didn’t do. And there is also the issue that he doesn’t speak German very well and communicates in English with ITR3. And then I think it’s really annoying that one cannot establish a shared understanding of this issue. And then I can definitely understand that trust erodes. I think this is irritating. (...) This decision has been taken but it is also their responsibility to ensure that it is communicated accordingly to maintain the trust that is between us. And it seems that there are some up here who do not take this seriously enough, which I think is important considering my close cooperation with them. If we didn’t have such a close collaboration with them and didn’t converse that much, well then: “whatever”. But this is really irritating. This is exactly about trust. (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:08:17.0-1:09:35.9)

Following IDK2’s account, a trusting relationship between her department at HQ and the Austrian subsidiary workforce was jeopardized by a HQ leader who did not deem it necessary to inform AT about a decision that would negatively affect AT’s budget. During IDK2’s explanation, she pointed out that some employees at HQ apparently may not understand the importance of proper communication with subsidiaries, neither did they seem to understand the relationship between proper communication and trust maintenance. It could be argued that some at HQ did not consider it crucial to inform the subsidiaries about their decisions as they had the position and power to make these decisions in the first place. Perhaps, in line with IDK1’s and IDK4’s notions of Turks believing in steep hierarchies (see Section 5.1), they might even have drawn on a similar stereotypical understanding of Turkish people and thus might have assumed that they were simply used to adhering to

hierarchies and therefore did not need to be informed at all. Yet, as mentioned earlier, it has been the Austrian subsidiary employees in particular who always requested an explanation of HQ's actions that affected them (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:11:49.5-0:19:45.2 and 0:24:16.2 - 0:24:54). However, it was mainly IDK2 who was contacted to provide these explanations, even when she was not responsible for the given decision. IDK2 stated that:

Whenever she was at the Austrian subsidiary, she would get all these questions and had to tackle the issues ITR3 had with the rest of HQ. And then she had to say that this was not her area of responsibility but that she would take it to the right person. In some way, IDK2 understood ITR3, but these things are still annoying since she would have liked to have that trust-based relationship with them in Austria. (Field notes; interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:09:35.9-1:15:00.0)

IDK2's accounts demonstrate that restricted knowledge about the others' needs may lead to an erosion of trust when someone, for example, does not provide another with the information he or she seeks. As hinted at, stereotyping might also result in practices which hinder trust development since they neither take the individual (ITR3 and her need for information) nor the context (i.e. the Austrian subsidiary that has to make a profit) into account. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that in the abovementioned case a combination of interacting factors led to the erosion of trust between HQ and AT. The HQ leader did not know the Austrian subsidiary workforce as well as IDK2 and therefore might have called upon a somewhat stereotypical understanding of how 'Turks' would react to 'top-down decision making', namely that they would simply accept it. Since he did not seem to know the subsidiary leader in person, he could not know that this approach was far from the truth. Throughout our conversations, ITR3 stressed that she understood ESAG to be built on teamwork, communication and information sharing. She stated:

Communication is an issue. Sometimes people forget to communicate and as I said, teamwork only functions if you are able to communicate. It doesn't

matter if we sit there together or not; if I don't tell you what's going on, you cannot know what's going on. (...) But I have raised this issue earlier and pointed out that there is a lack of communication. And they [HQ] tried many things but it's still far from perfect. (...) But we need to know what's going on. And especially detailed information is missing. For example if somebody has developed something new then others could assist and together we could perhaps develop the idea even further. And more communication would also enhance our feeling of belonging. And that is a human need as well. (Interview ITR3; May 2013; time stamp: 2:03:27.9-2:22:06.7)

Following ITR3's account, communication seems to be the most essential factor in good cooperation, innovation and inclusion. However, communication between HQ and the subsidiaries was also identified as one of ESAG's major weaknesses. As communication enhances knowledge and familiarity with each other, i.e. with the individual employee instead of the unknown group (the Turks), more frequent and informative communication would probably lead to cooperation that is less based on stereotypes. Hence, investing time and effort in more reasonable communication could be expected to result in improved actions that take the individual and the context into account instead of being based on stereotypical understandings and a lack of contextual knowledge.

Whereas IDK2 experienced erosions of trust from the Austrian subsidiary regarding HQ, including herself, she expressed that she trusted her co-workers at HQ and the subsidiaries as well as her leaders. In a manner similar to yet less pronounced than IDK1 (see section 5.3.1), IDK2 pointed out that one simply had to trust co-workers and superiors and especially superiors' decisions (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:24:16.2 - 0:24:54.6). It seems that she, like IDK1, was endowed with a rather high level of dispositional trust. Yet, in contrast to IDK1, it appears that IDK2's trust could be easily diminished when the trustees failed to live up to the abilities IDK2 perceived them to have. According to IDK2, she did not have much trust in those whose tasks finally ended up on her own desk. In other words, she perceived these persons as unable to do their work properly. This appears to refer to

the notion of efficiency, because some employees are assessed as having the ability to fulfill their tasks, but are eventually not able to realize them, which obviously diminishes both the company's and IDK2's efficiency as she had to take on these extra tasks. Thus, it seems that IDK2 interpreted trust along the lines of Mayer et al.'s (1995) notion of 'perceived ability' and thus assessed the trustees' skills and competencies needed to fulfill certain tasks in order to judge their trustworthiness. Yet, as the following analysis of her employee relationships will show, IDK2 also seemed to trust based on a perceived identification with the other.

#### **5.4.2 ITR10: A humble warehouse and order manager of Turkish origin**

ITR10 was raised in Austria and, according to him, could think like an Austrian. However, he also pointed out that he felt culturally closer to the Turks even though he knew and identified with Austrians. He stated that he lived in both cultures and that therefore culture did not play a role for him in terms of his work (Interview ITR10; December 2014; time stamp: 0:18:19.3-0:22:49.3). He joined the Austrian subsidiary in 2009 where he became responsible for warehousing and order management (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:00:11.6-0:02:46.8). Thus, he spent about 50% of his working hours at the desk at AT's office with his female colleagues, and the other half in the adjacent warehouse with his male colleagues. ITR10 was the most recent employee hired at AT, and he learned his tasks and AT's rules of the game from his female colleagues and his leader ITR3. Besides his daily contact with his subsidiary colleagues, he mentioned IDK2 as his main contact person at HQ, with whom he spoke on a daily basis (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:11:14.7-0:11:55.2). In addition, the daily telephone calls to HQ he used the software program Axapta to keep in contact with HQ or even, as he expressed it, to 'be at ESAG':

Now I enter IDK2's office (...). I can see what the Danes are up to tomorrow and vice versa of course as well; they can also have a look at everything and

we all use the same server; it's as if all of us would be sitting in a huge company in Denmark. (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:27:20.3-0:31:22.4)

Following ITR10's statement, the software system and the common server seems to establish a feeling of belonging to one common company in Denmark. The system is furthermore perceived to establish transparency because one can see what the others are doing in terms of sales, orders, profits and so on. Nevertheless, ITR10 stressed that personal contact was important in developing a good relationship and feelings of togetherness and belonging. Furthermore, he pointed out that personal contact also enabled trust building:

To me, personal contact is extremely important. But you can also easily destroy the trust you have built up over 4 years within one conversation in which you may make a stupid comment or show a resolute attitude. (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:31:32.9-0:32:52.1)

According to ITR10, personal contact can thus not only assist trust building but may also result in the diminishing of trust, depending on one's actions. In line with the overwhelming majority of this study's interactants, ITR10 mentioned that trust building takes time but that it can be broken within seconds. During his further account on the importance of personal contact, he started conceptualizing trust as a process in which he would try to read the other persons to know how they were doing and then he would take his steps. These steps would, however, have to be taken cautiously in order not to act in a way that would destroy the trust built so far. For him, successful trust building means establishing a series of positive interactions that are not interrupted by conflicts, which do, of course, occur. Nevertheless, according to ITR10, the trust building process can be continued with a sincere, honest and benevolent attitude. In any relationship one should move with caution, ITR10 argued (*ibid.*). In order for others to trust him, he pointed out that

Every company has rules of the game and if you stick to them, then you normally do not face any problems. In our business you have to take care of or pay attention to a few things: It's not my father's money I might lose when I make a mistake; and I have to feed my family with the money I earn here. Therefore, I am as flexible as I can be; I do my best for the company. (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:33:24.7-0:35:10)

According to ITR10's account, in his job there are two issues to which he must pay attention: First, he works with money that does not belong to him, and second, he needs his wages in order to make ends meet. Thus, he seems to be responsible to both his leader and ESAG in general and his family. He understands these two worlds to belong together. However, in contrast to the Danish workforce at HQ, who arguably follow the *illusio* of working for 'fun and self-evolvement' as hinted at in section 5.1, ITR10 works for money in order to make ends meet, or as he put it, "to earn my daily bread" (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:33:24.7-0:35:10.6). In light of the aforementioned rather high unemployment rate of ethnic minorities in Austria, it seems that ITR10 may perhaps struggle to find another job should he have to leave the company. Therefore, he always seemed to fully invest himself at work, which resonates with Bourdieu's statement on fields as "a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's energy" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:127). On the other hand, the above statement also seems to indicate that ITR10 sees his employment as a tool to fulfilling his obligations as head of the family, i.e. providing it with financial security. In other words, ITR10 uses his cultural and social capital to transfer it into *economic capital*, which then again can be converted into social capital in the form of security. As *economic capital* is very important to him in order to meet his family's expectations, he has to invest his knowledge and skills in ESAG and probably does not dare to risk his employment. Regarding trust, the above quote may indicate that as long as ITR10 follows the rules of the game, there is nobody who could complain about him and thus endanger his position. Moreover, following the rules seems to offer some predictability, or at least some sense of familiarity in

the form of having made the experience that people in general follow the rules laid out by the company. Thus trusting, or perhaps confidence in the other, seems to be enhanced when one follows the rules of the company. These, however, have to be learned and experienced, as ITR10 pointed out. But even though rules exist and may be known, ITR10 stated that these can be employed in different ways by different people. Therefore, one would have to spend time together in order to experience how the other reacts in certain situations. Common embodied experiences thus seem to be important for ITR10 as they represent stepping stones of trust building, especially if these experiences are made in challenging situations: "It's only in tricky and challenging situations that you really get to know the other: How do they react, what makes them tick, what are their personal boundaries? If everything goes fine and runs normally, it's really hard to assess people" (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:39:04.7-0:40:32.9). According to ITR10, it is in situations of conflict or perceived struggles that one discovers another's way of acting and thinking. Thus, it seems that normal situations do not help in assessing the other. Following this line of thought, it could be suggested that employees who follow formal rules are rather predictable and thus the risk of them behaving differently is relatively low. Consequently, these situations may not need to be built on trust, neither do they seem to foster trust. Rather, as mentioned by ITR10, it is the unknown and challenging situations that are jointly experienced that demonstrate the reactions another is capable of, and thus their perceived trustworthiness can be revealed. This notion seems to resonate with Lewicki & Bunker's (1996) notion of knowledge-based trust. According to them, trust may be built by going through a series of interactions with a certain other. In doing so, one would accumulate knowledge about their interaction patterns and thus it would be possible to anticipate the other's actions. However, according to ITR10, it appears to be the challenging situations, and not simply any normal situation, in which you gain real knowledge of the other. ITR10 explained the process of trusting similar to as outlined by Lewicki & Bunker:

Trust well [4 sec pause] trust can only emerge over time, yes. [hmm] You can get trust in advance [Vertrauensvorschuss] but in the end ... you cannot build

trust without giving it time. Firstly you have to get to know each other and find out how the person reacts or how he reacted earlier [hmm]. And the sum of all these experiences is either 100% trust or a feeling of not being sure. Therefore, I think trust is like a series which should not be broken. [hmm] As I said you can ruin trust within 5 minutes. But from the moment I started here 4 years ago, I see it as a golden series [hmm] yes. [ITR10 smiles] [yes, yes] and uhm ... trust is the sum of many experiences made with another human being. (...) You need time to be sure; without time there is no trust. (Interview ITR10; May 2013; time stamp: 0:40:48.7-0:42:42.8)

In his further account of trust, he mentioned that trust is something situated in the subconscious, which arguably influences how he handles breaches of trust because some people may have to disappoint him several times before he trusts them less (ibid. time stamp: 0:42:49.4-0:45:52.3). In line with the above quote, this notion may indicate that it is not only the personal trajectory through time that influences how a person builds trust, but that it may well be influenced by the way one identifies with the other. Thus, on the one hand trust building seems to be heavily influenced by one's habitus as it comprises one's disposition to trust, which is developed through experiences of trust. On the other hand, however, identification with the other seems to present the trustee with the freedom to not necessarily live up to the trust bestowed in him/her. Thus, it could be suggested that identification based trust may represent a 'strong' form of trust (Maguire & Phillips 2008), which could endure some instances of violation of trust.

### ***Experiences of trust in IDK2's relation with ITR10***

Regarding her relationship with ITR10, IDK2 pointed out that she has a lot of trust in ITR10 due to the conversations she has had with him (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:01:04.1-1:02:43.8). Some of these conversations even revolved around very personal experiences such as those mentioned in the quote at the beginning of Section 5.4. Moreover, IDK2 mentioned that due to her visits to AT, she experienced the entire AT staff to be rather trustworthy and that therefore she trusted them (ibid.). Hence, unsurprisingly, IDK2 found that regular visits and face-



to-face meetings enhanced her understanding of the subsidiary staff, including ITR10. However, her trust in ITR10 seemed to be grounded on conditions that were different from her trust in the other subsidiary members. IDK2 seemed to feel sorry for ITR10's situation at AT. She said:

I think they are quite hard on him. He's the only man down there and he is so efficient (...) and we really don't want see to him leave (...) I wonder if that has anything to do with their culture? You know that women are of less value than men. Now there are three women and one man. Now they have the chance to let off their steam with regards to men. (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:15:35.4-0:20:40.5)

Following IDK2's account, the perceived inferiority of women in 'Turkish' culture seems to negatively influence the internal collaboration at the subsidiary. In addition, IDK2 seems to assign more power to the female subsidiary workforce than to the male, as the men were in the minority. Nevertheless, ITR10 stated that he had a good and trusting relationship with his colleagues and especially his superior, ITR3 (Interview ITR10; December 2014; time stamp: 0:33:47.3-0:38:17.7). May IDK2 have misinterpreted the situation? After all, ITR10 did not directly inform her he was feeling unfairly treated; neither did he tell me about it, nor did I observe any form of malevolence. Nevertheless, in a later interview, ITR10 pointed out that one of his female colleagues appeared to be a bit jealous of him having climbed the subsidiary career ladder faster than she had. ITR10 mentioned that she seemed to see him as a competitor, which resulted in him having less trust in her than in his other (female) colleagues (Interview ITR10; December 2014; time stamp: 0:38:17.7-0:40:00.5). Arguably, what IDK2 ascribed to being based on culture seemed rather to be based on a personal trait and an idiosyncratic reaction to perceived unfairness, as said female colleague of ITR10 had been with the company for over 15 years but had not been offered a position or tasks that could be considered to represent a higher status. Thus, it could be argued that for ITR10 trust was not only related to the role of a person or their ability to solve a certain task but also to his or her character and behavior, which ITR10 called the "human aspect" (Interview ITR10;

December 2014; time stamp: 0:33:47.3-0:38:17.7). As mentioned above, perceived benevolence seems to be an important indicator for ITR10 when judging a person's trustworthiness. In fact, in line with Mayer et al. (1995), ITR10 portrayed both perceived and experienced benevolence as essential to trust:

Well, that's important [yes]. If I feel: Okay, that person envies me, every time I am successful he is in a bad mood [hmm] then I don't trust him. But if I see that this person shares my happiness [ITR10 is clapping his hands] [hmm] when I am successful, then I think: Okay this person I can trust. He is happy where others show greed. And that's benevolence and that plays a huge role in trust building. [ja]" (Interview ITR10; December 2014; time stamp: 0:40:58.9-0:48:34.6)

According to his account, not being appreciative of another's success and instead showing greed indicated malevolence, which signaled to ITR10 that he could not trust that person. Examining ITR10's justifications for his trust in IDK2, he again pointed to the notion of benevolence when he remarked:

IDK2 is my primary contact in Denmark [yes]. She never says no, she's always positive; she always tries to help even though we [AT] are internal customers, it's always easier to say 'no' to internal customers, she [yes] always tries to realize things, no matter what I like her to do, she tries to support me [hmm] and I trust her a lot. (Interview ITR10; December 2014; time stamp: 0:33:47.3-0:38:17.7).

According to ITR10, he trusted IDK2 because she always appeared to be positive, helpful and supportive. He experienced her as truly trying to assist him in his work. This seems to point to the notion of benevolence which Mayer et al. (1995) defined as the perception of a positive orientation of the trustee towards the trustor, and an expression of genuine concern and care. While ITR10's trust in IDK2 arguably rests primarily on the belief in her benevolence, IDK2 seems to justify her trust towards ITR10 primarily on the grounds of perceived ability, which she expressed by

referring to ITR10 as being “efficient and really good to collaborate with” (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:20:47.9-0:21:34.1). As ITR10 was promoted within the subsidiary, it could be argued that he seems to possess the ability to fulfill his role at ESAG and can thus live up to IDK2’s expectation of him. Furthermore, she mentioned that they simply understood each other due to their daily telephone calls (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:06:15.4-1:08:17.0) and the many rather private issues she was aware of regarding him, the like of which she did not know about any of the other employees at AT (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:43:52.9-0:45:15.3). It seems that non-work related conversations led to enhanced trust, and probably to more openness, which is why IDK2 may have expected him to have a hard time with his female colleagues. Moreover, as mentioned above, IDK2 indicated that she felt pity for ITR10 and that she generally had the impression that he would “establish ties with us [sales support department at HQ] because he sits down there all on his own” (Interview IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 0:20:47.9-0:21:34.1). According to IDK2, ITR10 seemed to identify more with HQ than with his subsidiary because he faced challenging working conditions at AT. As mentioned earlier, this only partly seems to have been the case. Nevertheless, following IDK2’s accounts, she probably based her trust in ITR10 on perceived ability and integrity, as ITR10 seems to have consistently adhered to a set of principles acceptable to IDK2, such as always doing his best for the company. Moreover, the long lasting process of daily interactions seemingly raised each other’s knowledge of the other and thus their level of familiarity. Also, IDK2 mentioned feeling sorry for ITR10, suggesting that her trust mirrored an ‘affect based trust’ (McAllister 1995), which could be argued to coincide with Lewicki & Bunker’s notion of ‘identification based trust’. In any case, IDK2’s notion of ITR10 identifying with HQ suggests that their mutual trust may also be partly based on shared identification. IDK2’s notion of being the only female leader at HQ may support this assumption, because she had arguably experienced herself how it felt and what it meant to be ‘the only one’ in a certain group. She said: “I wish for more [female leaders]. There is a difference between men and women, we

all know that, so it's bad that the other female leader switched to another position” (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:54:24.6-1:58:41.1).

IDK2's leadership practices in her relationship with ITR10 were rather subtle and seemed to revolve primarily around providing assistance and motivation, as ITR10 proactively contacted IDK2 on a daily basis and thus conveyed both his needs and achievements. In addition, ITR10 and IDK2 were able to monitor all sales-related activities at all times using Axapta.

In summary, the trust process in IDK2's relationship with ITR10 could be visualized as follows:

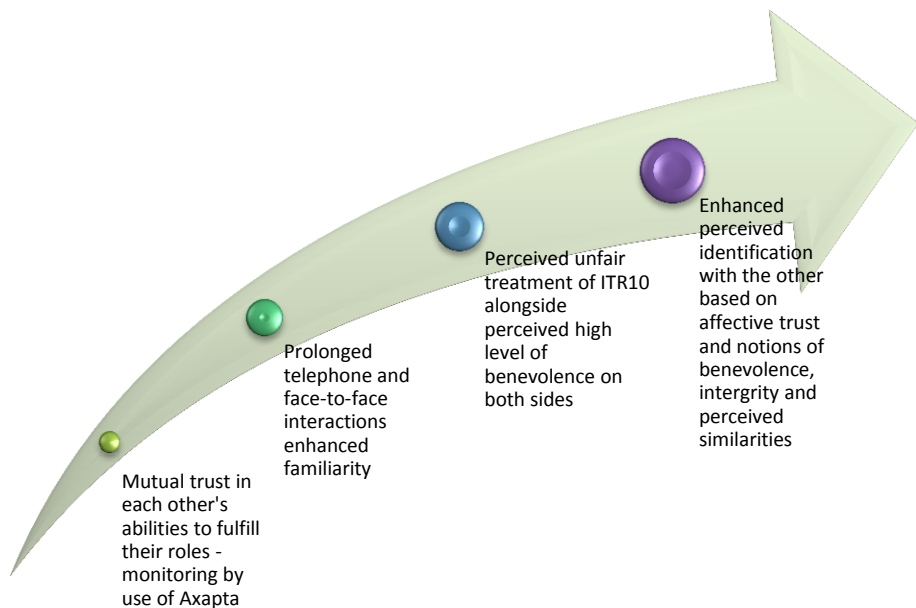


Figure 17: The process of trusting between IDK2 and ITR10

In short, this process seems to have been initiated by believing in each other's abilities to perform in their respective roles at the company. Throughout their collaboration, IDK2 and ITR10 confirmed each other's trustworthiness beliefs in regard to having the competencies needed to work efficiently. Over time, their conversations included private matters and ITR10 shared sensitive personal information (building *social capital*) with IDK2. They seem to have become more familiar with both each other and their work practices during their collaboration. The perceived mistreatment of ITR10 seems to then have moved IDK2's level of trust closer to affective trust (McAllister 1995), which seemed to be based on benevolence and integrity beliefs and which are part of Lewicki & Bunker's (1996) notion of 'identification based trust'. In terms of leadership practices, this relation suggests that IDK2 seemed to rely on the software program 'Axapta', which gave her a subtle 'control'-tool to monitor all sales-related activities throughout ESAG. As efficiency appears to have represented her main goal, Axapta was the optimum tool for checking her employees' efficiency in terms of volume of sales and profit maximization. When she was asked for help, she enacted her role as assistant and motivating leader. Thus, in regard to ITR10, who actively approached her when help was required and who portrayed efficiency, I understand her leadership style to be very subtle and almost not 'practiced' but rather conveyed by her status at the company (*symbolic capital*) and her presumably benevolent behaviors.

#### **5.4.3 ITR5: ESAG's first ethnic Turkish trainee at HQ**

Prior to his traineeship at ESAG, ITR5 used ESAG as a case company for his final thesis, which revolved around sales in the Turkish market (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 1:17:09.1-1:18:12.6). Via this cooperation, he came to know IDK4, who could be regarded as his former key person at ESAG. While he knew the head of HR (IDK4), he did not know any of the employees at the sales support

department at HQ where he started his traineeship in March 2014. ITR5 compared his first days of his traineeship with his first days at school:

A new job, surrounding and a new work place, it's like the first day at school, everybody approaches you: Who is this guy, [yes] who do I have to look into the eyes 8 hours a day?" [yes], .. but they've all been very nice to me, kind and courteous. So, I still feel that I have received a great introduction [hmm]. Normally people say it takes a few months before you get adjusted to your new everyday; I don't think I took me longer than 3 days. [Interviewer: laughing: "that sounds good"], even though I had to commute 4 hours every day for the first two weeks. It's like that's ... the spirit and desire to get to work. (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 0:05:48.7-0:07:58.5)

According to ITR5, the first days and weeks of his traineeship were "fantastic"; he felt welcomed and had the impression that he had settled down and gotten used to his work soon after he had started, which was much earlier than expected, according to him. In addition, he pointed out that he felt such a "desire and enthusiasm" for his position that he accepted the daily 4-hour commute for the first two weeks. Thereafter, he found a flat closer to the company, reducing his travel time to one hour. By pointing out that he was willing to spend 12 hours a day on his traineeship, he might have been indicating that he is a 'hard working and determined young man who wants to succeed in life'. This attitude appears to pervade some of his notions concerning the future. For example, he pointed out that he would like to work as ESAG's bridge builder, thus facilitating ESAG's connections with Turkey, while being stationed in Istanbul (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 1:17:09.1-1:18:12.6). On the other hand, in the long run he could also imagine a top-management position at ESAG's HQ (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 2:11:35.5-2:19:05.1). As ESAG mainly practiced internal promotion, ITR5's perspectives of his future might be somewhat realistic. However, in light of ITR7's notion of not really having a chance of promotion at ESAG as pointed out earlier (see Section 5.3.6), ITR5's chances of attaining a managerial position at ESAG's HQ might be rather slim, even though by then he may possess the relevant

educational background, language skills, work experiences (*cultural capital*) and the 'will to win'. Perhaps an essential aspect for being promoted at ESAG is not one's competencies or skills to fulfill a certain position but rather whether or not one would 'fit in' in terms of tacitly adhering to more or less the same values and knowing how to acquit oneself at work. In other words, one has to learn the '*rules of the game at ESAG*' in order to know how to get promoted and be accepted for promotion.

Concerning ESAG's rules of the game, ITR5 had to learn a variety of do's and don'ts, while some experiences he made apparently surprised him. For instance, he seemed to be rather amazed by ESAG's flat hierarchy and open door policy:

I didn't expect that uhm ... I found out that it is informal, so, you can actually believe that you are on a par with all of them [yes] and the CEO is sitting ... really close by; he's in the same location and on the same floor as all the others [yes]. Well many thoughts crossed my mind [hmm] and this is a very informal organizational structure ... and that makes many things so much easier for an employee. (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 0:08:46.0-0:11:35.5)

According to ITR5, being 'allowed' the opportunity to talk with the CEO in the same manner as with any other employee makes a new employee's working life easier. It seems that ITR5 found it advantageous to work at a company with a seemingly flat hierarchy and a focus on 'equality'. Given how much his astonishment pervades this quote, it could be argued that he was not used to working in a company with such a flat hierarchy and informality as he perceived at ESAG. As the overwhelming majority of Danish companies tend to work according to the principles of equality, flat hierarchy, and 'Freedom with Responsibility', all of which resemble the so-called Scandinavian Leadership Style (Bjerke 1999:199; Dickson et al. 2003:741), it seems that ITR5 was rather unknowledgeable about Danish leadership in general, even though he had grown up and studied in Denmark and used ESAG as a case in point for his final thesis at a commercial college in

Denmark. However, during this final project he stayed in Istanbul in order to study the Turkish food market for ESAG. Therefore, it was clearly not until his traineeship at ESAG that he was introduced to so-called “Danish leadership” and the philosophy of “Freedom with Responsibility”. Therefore, it seems fair to suggest that ITR5’s social, and to some extent educational, life played out in an ethnic minority Turkish setting, even though his educational background (*institutionalized cultural capital*), in form of his certificates and diploma, was set in the Danish context. Thus, I claim that ITR5’s *cultural capital portfolio* consists of a rather prominent Turkish and a not so prominent Danish part. As hinted at, and as will become more apparent in the following paragraphs, ITR5’s *habitus* seems to be predominantly comprised by his *embodied cultural capital* representing his ethnic minority Turkish background, which he acquired from his extended Turkish family during his childhood and which furthermore seems to have influenced his social network, as this mainly consists of family members, friends and acquaintances of Turkish origin. It could be argued that ITR5 had been living in a parallel world, which could be called a ‘world of ethnic minorities’; a ‘world’ with its own rules, logics, and power structures which influence, restrict and enable its members’ practices and strategies for maximizing capital. Which *form of capital* social agents struggle over depends on the *field* and it seems reasonable to suggest that ethnic minority groups, such as ethnic Turks in Denmark, Austria and Germany, seemingly have to struggle for at least two forms of capital simultaneously: the form of capital favored in their ‘field of ethnic minority’ and that acknowledged in the ‘field of ethnic majority’. In regard to possible differences, I have already mentioned that the ‘field’ of ethnic business seems to value *social capital* somewhat higher than *economic capital*, which arguably represents the form of capital acknowledged by social agents in the economic field and the field of ESAG. In summary, ITR5 could be characterized as living in two worlds at the same time: He is proud to follow Turkish customs and rules of collaboration; he has a Danish education and is fluent in Danish; however, he does not seem to be very familiar with the rules of neither the ‘Danish business field’ nor the larger social field in Denmark. Hence, his primary *habitus* seems to be Turkish while his secondary is Danish. This assumption was further backed up by ITR5’s



discussion of cultural identity (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 0:22:31.2-0:25:37.9) during which he pointed out that he loved Denmark but that he could not identify as a Dane. Rather, he said, he tried to uphold his Turkish roots, which is exactly what made him different from the others and even though this difference hurt once in a while and it was nothing he chose consciously (ibid.; time stamp: 0:20:27.4-0:22:31.2), he did not “want to be assimilated” (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 0:22:31.2-0:25:37.9). He explained:

We are simply different [hmm]. We see this in the way we sit and we eat, when we talk [hmm], when you travel, it doesn't matter what you do [hmm] you are different [hmm]. I often get this, just the other day someone told me: Hadn't we heard your name we would have taken you for a Dane. [hmm] And that's not a compliment. (...) It's fine to say that my Danish is that good that one cannot grasp I am a foreigner (udlænding) right? [hmm] But I don't want to be considered to be Danish. (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 0:25:37.9-0:26:56.1)

Following ITR5's account, he appears to have understood that it is an advantage to 'belong to two cultural worlds'. Nevertheless, the Turkish culture, i.e. the cultural values his parents brought with them to their new host country, is what he seemed to treasure most and what tacitly guided his daily behavior. Arguably, ITR5's account is a good example of a *habitus*' mismatch with the societal field in a certain “territorial unit” (Bourdieu 2005:126): The daily practices conducted by ITR5 seem to be reasonable in the social field occupied by ethnic minority Turks in Denmark, yet are regarded as somewhat inappropriate in the work field ‘inhabited’ by ethnic majority Danes. Being a social agent in both fields at the same time is arguably rather strenuous work. Perhaps, therefore, he decided to settle for one cultural identity rather than trying to consider himself a ‘hybrid’, a ‘bicultural’, or someone “between: living in the hyphen” (Anne Marie Nakagawa, 2005), an approach chosen by ITR4, ITR10, and ITR1. Instead of referring to himself as a ‘Danish-Turk’, for example, he decided to identify himself as a Turk born and living in Denmark. I deem it necessary to mention though that while it is common to use the hyphen in

English and German when referring to citizens with migration backgrounds (e.g. ‘Turkish-Canadians’ or ‘German-Turks’ (Deutsch-Türken)), this variant is very seldom used in Danish. Non-Danish residents are mainly called ‘New-Danes’ (Nydansker) in Denmark, thus, arguably expressing ‘assimilation’, which ITR5 said was the worst thing that could happen to someone from an ethnic minority background (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 0:22:31.2-0:25:37.9). ITR5 could either identify as a Dane, a ‘New Dane’, or a Turk, he chose the latter even though he indicated that he drew from both ethnicities. ITR5 seemed to be proud to be different and practiced his ‘Turkishness’ not only in his social network but also at work where he spoke Turkish with ESAG’s subsidiary employees and where he followed Muslim practices such as observing Ramadan. For ESAG’s HR-manager, IDK4, ITR5’s religious belief in particular seemed to demonstrate that ITR5 was different from all other employees at ESAG HQ. For example IDK4 pointed out that:

Well, we talked about it with you that there are new things for us in having somebody like you. [yes, starts laughing] [ITR5: and now you say again “somebody like you”, I have the red passport if it’s that what you mean] Well it’s ..., this morning I thought you have been to Padborg yesterday but we offered lunch here. (...) And I talked to [name of a person responsible for preparing lunch] and told her that we have to remember that we have a .. yes that we have a Muslim as colleague. And we have to have this in the back of our heads. (...) And should it happen that a piece of bacon finds its way into the buffet, well, then it’s not bad-will, then it’s uhm [IDK2: then there happened a mistake]. Then there happened a mistake. [ITR5: we are all human beings]. (First evaluation meeting; April 2014; time stamp: 0:25:40-0:27:16)

According to IDK4’s account, ESAG had to adjust to ITR5’s religious beliefs as eating pork was forbidden by his religion. However, as ESAG’s workforce consisted primarily of ethnic Danes, “a mistake could be made”, as mentioned by IDK2; a mistake that would not be grounded on bad-will, but rather on the fact that they were

not used to having a multicultural workforce at HQ. During IDK4's account, ITR5 made attempts to point out that he nevertheless belonged to Danish society at large and therefore was not 'that different' after all. For example, ITR5 mentioned that "I have the red passport", which obviously refers to the Danish EU-passport. More interesting however is his earlier remark "and when you say 'someone like you'", which could arguably have initiated a discussion of 'belonging', seeing that IDK4's use of the word 'you' already excluded ITR5 from ESAG's workforce, which is referred to as 'we' throughout IDK4's account. In that sense, ITR5's notion of "we are all humans" seemingly could be interpreted as an attempt to reconstruct a community in which he was positioned *together* with ESAG's workforce and thus belonged to them. In any case, ITR5 gave the impression that he did not want to be treated differently because of his Muslim background (ibid: time stamp: 0:27:16-0:28:25). In general, ITR5 presented himself as being an asset for ESAG due to having dual cultural backgrounds that he could switch between depending on the context (ibid: time stamp: 0:31:00-0:33:40).

In summary, ITR5 expressed that he had the right educational background (*institutionalized cultural capital*) for the position as sales trainee at ESAG and, furthermore, that he saw his Turkish background (*embodied cultural capital*) as an advantage because ESAG's main customer group had Turkish roots. However, the advantage of his Turkish ethnicity was highlighted as not having been decisive in his attaining a trainee position; both ITR5 and IDK4 pointed out that having Turkish roots would not mean that ITR5 would predominantly work with customers of Turkish origin (see quote below). Perhaps this was why ITR5 was supposed to spend his traineeship at ESAG's various departments and not only at the department of ethnic sales. He pointed out that:

Well I am not told that his is the case. It might of course have had an important influence on it [getting the position as trainee] but I hope I sold myself via the things I did prior to my employment here, that's not simply because I wrote a project about the ethnic market. But I am told that I got the position because they looked at all my qualifications. In order to avoid that

thought I am to continue in the department for Sales in the Middle East and Asia. (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 0:03:54.7-0:05:33.3)

In addition to his rather unique cultural capital portfolio, ITR5 seemed to have a broad social network (*social capital*) which was, however, predominantly embedded in the ethnic minority Turkish societies in Germany, Denmark and Austria. He used this network to, for example, find suitable places to stay during his traineeship at ESAG's subsidiaries. It seems that ITR5's social life primarily took place within this 'Turkish' network since he mentioned having many Turkish friends but only a few Danish ones (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 1:04:52.9-1:14:58.5). In general, he gave the impression of assisting members of his network as they had assisted him. In his account of how ethnic Turks support each other and expect to be supported, ITR5 arguably seemed to refer to ethnic Turks as one big family with similar past experiences; therefore, one knew how the other feels, which in turn meant that he felt obliged to help because "one has been walking in similar shoes" (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 1:04:52.9-1:14:58.5).

When I asked him whether his assisting attitude towards ethnic minority Turks was based on a general disposition to trust people with his background, he pointed out that he felt obliged to help 'likeminded ethnic Turks' but that only time would tell whether it was wise to place such trust in another (*ibid.*; time stamp: 1:04:52.9-1:14:58.5). Arguably, ITR5 seemed to have a tendency to more or less unconditionally trust those he perceived as 'likeminded' due to seemingly similar life trajectories or perceived similar cultural or religious backgrounds. In that sense, it could be argued that ITR5 considered ethnic minority Turks a rather homogenous group consisting of similar persons who understood each other, assisted each other and invited other likeminded individuals into their group, thus (re)producing their power structures and values, for example. It seems that trusting is easier to practice in a group of seemingly likeminded persons, i.e. agents with a similar *habitus*, who in the case of ethnic minority Turks are arguably placed on and have (re)constructed

a common social sub-field with practices, such as helping out fellow players, that appear reasonable to them.

When I asked ITR5 to elaborate on his understanding of trust, he highlighted the importance of personal traits rather than a person's cultural or religious background as being decisive for trust building. According to ITR5 (Interview ITR5; April 2014; time stamp: 1:22:40.2-1:30:27.3), he understands trust as being equal to his signature, symbolizing that he engages in a type of contract or relationship with the other, thus accepting responsibility for his actions. This, he mentioned, makes him actively build trust, yet this trust is mutual. ITR5 seems to indicate that a signed contract would approximate 'ask for trusting' from the other. On the other hand, the signing of a contract could also be understood as an outcome of mutual trust. ITR5's further account may support the latter, as he expressed the desire to initiate relationships with people he did not know, in this case with IDK4, from a rather sceptic or critical standpoint. In such a case, trust building is, according to ITR5, a matter of showing benevolence and acting towards a win-win situation. Arguably, ITR5 seems to consider trust an outcome of calculations and rational choices, as for instance outlined by Coleman (1988) and Yamagishi et al. (1998). However, as ITR5, on the other hand, appears to trust fellow ethnic minority Turks despite not knowing them, he may additionally base his trust on perceived similarities in 'dispositions' (Frederiksen 2012:74) as outlined above. Still, both understandings seemingly hinge on perceived familiarity with the other. This may be why ITR5 emphasized the importance of face-to-face contacts for trust building, which he called "establishing a relationship with the other" because "knowing the other means a lot in my world" (First evolution meeting April 2014; time stamp: 00.10.04-00.10.54). Here I need to add his mentioning of the war in Syria and his reaction to that – drawing parts of national political discourse into the company and his perception of DK leadership as 'always knowing better'.

### ***Experiences of trust in IDK2's relation with ITR5***

The relationship between IDK2 and ITR5 appears to have begun with the belief in each other's abilities to fulfill their roles, i.e. ITR5 had the educational background

(*incorporated cultural capital*) to take on a traineeship at ESAG. In her role as leader of the sales support department, IDK2 has had several trainees in her department, indicating that she has experience in teaching newcomers the rules, tools and practices of the game. Moreover, IDK2 was the company's expert in Axapta, the key tool for registering and monitoring all sales-related activities throughout ESAG. As a profound knowledge of Axapta was needed in order to understand the company's entire value chain and the processes related thereto, all trainees started their traineeship in the sales support department. As the leader of this department and, at the same time, the person with the greatest knowledge of the Axapta program, IDK2 most likely represented not only the most suitable instructor for ITR5 but also seemed to possess a high level of *symbolic capital* and *power*. ITR5, on the other hand, did not seem to hold any power in relation to IDK2, as he had entered the company as a trainee who was not familiar with working at a private firm, ESAG's work processes, its structures and its rules of the game, and who could be released from his trainee contract if the company deemed it necessary. However, as mentioned above, ITR5 held a cultural capital portfolio that ESAG wanted to draw from and further invest in.

As ITR5 and the entire staff at sales support, including IDK2, did not know each other at all, the first weeks and months were spent becoming more familiar with each other. During the first evaluation meeting, 3 months after ITR5 had started his traineeship, IDK2 summarized her impression of and relationship with ITR5 in the following way:

We are really happy to having him in our department. That's for sure and it's a win-win situation. Really [ITR5: Hmm absolutely]. (First evaluation meeting, April 2014; time stamp: 0:09:04-0:09:27)

According to IDK2, the first 3 months ran smoothly and there seemed to be no issues to report to the head of HR. This impression was also given by ITR5, who spoke of his first months as a "pleasure" since he only met "nice, smiling and

forthcoming people” (First evaluation meeting; April 2014; time stamp: 0:15:41-0:18:46).

The above quotes indicate that all parties learned from each other, making the relationship a win-win situation. Based on ITR5’s understanding of trust, such a situation should foster trust between him and his leader, IDK2. IDK2 on the other hand, seemed to be very open and interested in learning about ITR5’s culture and religion. During lunch meetings and whenever there was time during working hours, ITR5 and IDK2 could be observed discussing the differences and similarities between Islam and Christianity (Field notes; Observation at the Department of Ethnic Sales; April 2014; page 2 and 3). ITR5 seemed to be very knowledgeable about the Koran and Muslim festivities, which ITR10 pointed out as being a relatively rare trait in young men from ethnic Turkish minorities; a trait which ITR5 should be proud of (Interview ITR10; December 2014; time stamp: 0:22:49.3-0:28:47.1).

In general, HQ personnel had to get to know ITR5 and vice versa, and this seemed to proceed smoothly on all sides. However, only three months later, IDK2 expressed that she struggled with ITR5’s interpretation of ‘reasonable actions’ at work. As mentioned earlier, ITR5 was seen as “somebody different”, somebody whom they had not worked with before, which IDK4 summarized as being *the first Muslim at HQ* (First evaluation meeting; April 2014; time stamp: 00.30.19-00.31.00). It seems that his religious background combined with his very different life trajectory led him to behave in ways that were perceived to be inappropriate at work. As indicated in Section 5.2.3, ITR5 seemed to struggle with how to balance private and work-related practices during his traineeship. Furthermore, he apparently used too much Turkish at work, meaning that other HQ personnel could not understand him. In the second evaluation meeting, IDK2 mentioned that ITR5 was a great addition to the company and that he worked in a very thorough way. However, his thoroughness took time, which meant that IDK2 perceived his working style to be not as efficient as she had hoped for. It could be argued that IDK2’s expectations regarding ITR5’s learning abilities were not met since it transpired that ITR5 took more time in

solving tasks than the previous trainees had. ITR5 responded that he was confident of becoming faster, thus perhaps implicating that he was aware of IDK2's standards and focus on work speed and efficiency. As mentioned above, IDK2 was furthermore irritated by ITR5's extensive use of Turkish. She said that on the one hand, it was fine since HQ wanted him to introduce himself to sales people in Turkish. On the other hand, however, ITR5 seemed also to make many longer private phone calls in Turkish, which she later expressed as a behavior showcasing ITR5's misinterpretation of "Freedom with Responsibility" (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:58:41.1-2:03:28.1). It seems that ITR5 struggled to become aware of the tacit rules of the field of ESAG and, while drawing too often on his *embodied cultural capital*, he rendered himself more and more different in the face of ESAG's quite homogeneous workforce. It could be argued that he unknowingly enacted his dispositions by practicing his culture, which in turn 'singled him out' and signaled his difference to IDK2 who then explained that these struggles were based on ITR5's cultural background and proudness. Obviously, ITR5's and IDK2's practical senses did not match as ITR5 seemingly re(created) the logics of the social field of ethnic minority Turks, while IDK2 re(produced) the logics of the field of ESAG. As outlined in Section 5.3, these fields seem to follow rather different logics, which may explain the struggles between ITR5 and IDK2. These struggles resulted in a perceived decline and complete erosion of trust. ITR5 said that IDK2 clearly saw issues that he had not experienced as such; on the contrary, both customers and IDK2 herself told him that he was very fast and he could therefore not understand why she would say something different during the evaluation meeting. According to ITR5, this "changed things from this moment: something inside me perished" (Field notes; Observation DE-W; September 2014; page 2). IDK2 also expressed a change in her relationship to ITR5, which "started fine but then gradually took a turn towards the negative (...) I have not heard from him since, but that's okay; I did what I thought was the right thing" (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:58:41.1-2:03:28.1). During her account, she pointed out that the struggles she had had with ITR5 could be perceived as being grounded in "having been really bad at matching expectations right from the start"



(ibid., time stamp: 2:04:27.9-2:11:35.5). However, as ESAG's rules and logics and ITR5's framing dispositions arguably are tacitly embedded in the fields, it would seem rather difficult to visualize them and become aware of them. Moreover, on several occasions IDK4 pointed out that all employees had to learn ESAG's rules on their own while being part of its field. As pointed out in Section 5.2, it could be argued that it takes struggles to become aware of different understandings and thus struggles are required in the first place to see the need for matching expectations based on the awareness that there *seem to be a difference of expectations*. In summary, it could be argued that trust may seem to be relevant for both ITR5 and IDK2, yet it appears to have been challenged by a misalignment of ideas and practical sense, resulting in a perception of growing dissimilarity with the other. The process of trusting between IDK2 and ITR5 could be visualized in the following way (see figure 18).

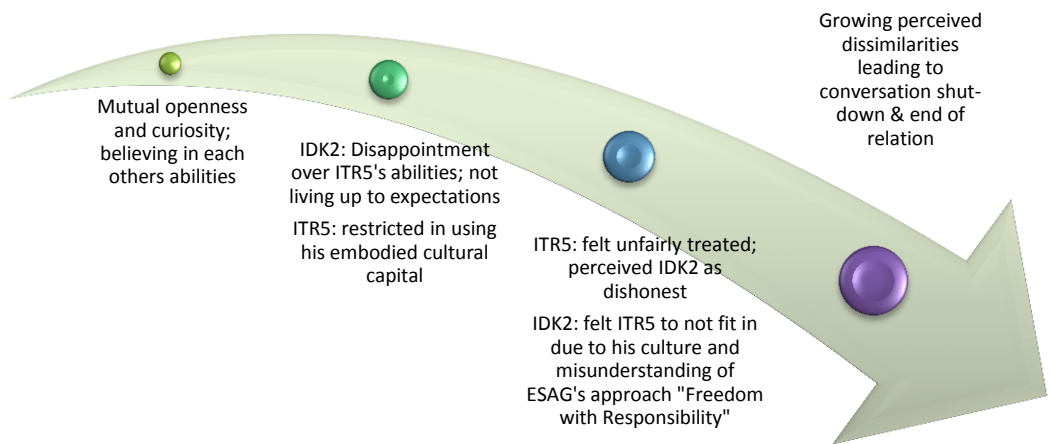


Figure 18: The process of trusting between IDK2 and ITR5

In short, from IDK2's perspective ITR5 was continually unable to live up to her expectations, thus arguably not fulfilling the perceived abilities. As IDK2 focused on increasing ESAG's efficiency, ITR5's perceived slowness and misinterpretation of ESAG's rules of the game arguably put her main goal in danger. Over time, IDK2 increasingly seemed to blame ITR5's cultural background for not being able to fit in and since one's culture arguably is not easily changed, IDK2 'surrendered in her attempt to change' him, which she expressed as "a fight I just couldn't win" (Interview IDK2; January 2015; time stamp: 1:58:41.1-2:03:28.1). ITR5, on the other hand, expressed that he had the ability to fulfill his position; he arguably saw himself as even exceeding his position's requirements as he invested his embodied cultural capital at work, helping with the understanding of Turkish customs, language and food. However, even though his cultural knowledge seemed to be in demand, he felt that it was not respected by IDK2 as she criticized his apparent 'excessive' use of Turkish. When IDK2 then seemed to behave unfairly or even dishonestly, ITR5 discontinued his relationship with her. As ITR5 treasured his cultural background, IDK2's behavior seemed to have threatened the most important part of his identity, namely his Turkish roots. In light of IDK2's notion of having given up in the fight to change ITR5, it could be argued that ITR5, in spite of his position as trainee, seemed to have a more powerful standing than IDK2, his leader. However, considering that ITR5 had just started his traineeship and that his contract could have been terminated at any point in time, he probably had the least powerful position in the field of ESAG. On the other hand, while IDK2 appeared to execute her leadership in form of coaching and assistance, this did not seem to help ITR5 understand ESAG's rules of the game.

Taking a perspective inspired by Bourdieu, however, highlights that practices cannot be understood without analyzing the context and relationship in which they take place. Therefore, I deem it necessary to provide a tentative picture of these contexts. As hinted at, the aforementioned struggles indicate that ESAG's employees and leaders work across various contexts with diverse logics. Inspired by Bourdieu's notion of the field and his approach to field analysis, I will in the following analyze

the different contexts or ‘fields and sub-fields’ in and across which ESAG’s employees and leaders interact. A tentative analysis of the field is, furthermore, crucial in order to understand the interactants’ interpretations and experiences of trust and leadership in light of ESAG’s and the leaders’ practices of consolidating the perceived differences between HQ and its subsidiaries, which, as analyzed, could enhance trust or at times resulted in further struggles, such as struggles over belonging, identification and recognition, which seemed partly to be driven by the intersection of the *field of ESAG* with other fields, such as the broader *societal field*, the *educational field* and the *family field*.

## **5.5 The tentative ‘Field of ESAG’**

Inspired by Bourdieu’s field analysis (see Chapter 4), this section explores ESAG as a *field* in which the leaders and employees of this study are positioned and in which they try to position themselves according to their *habitus* and *capital portfolio*. The aim is to understand the ‘objective structure’ of the field as well as its logics of practice, its *illusio*, which influences the actors’ range of ‘reasonable’ actions, including their leadership practices, which in turn relates to the aforementioned notions of ‘recognition, respect, and identification’, all of which the analysis (see sections 5.1 – 5.4) has indicated to influence trusting in one way or another. Understanding the field of ESAG not only helps to make sense of the actors’ actions and their possible actions therein, it also assists in locating the field of ESAG in the wider socio-cultural context, and thus furthers our understanding of how other fields influence the field of ESAG and, hence, the leader-employee relations submerged in it. The point of departure for this section is the description of ESAG’s organizational structure and corporate culture as explained by this dissertation’s interactants, as well as the interactants’ accounts on their roles, positions and areas of responsibility within this structure. In addition, I draw on the leaders’ and employees’ experiences of their employment at ESAG in order to describe and analyze the influence of

structure on agency and vice versa. In that sense, the following section resembles a summary of the earlier sections of Chapter 5.

### **5.5.1 The Game**

As outlined by Bourdieu, social fields are fairly homogenous as they all encompass social actors in a variety of positions - some of which are dominant, others subordinate. Fields comprise valued forms of capital and interests as well as struggles. The company ESAG can be understood as a field of its own (Bourdieu 2005:197) since it has its own specific rules and logics of practice, which one would ‘feel’ upon entering the field. It is these rules and logics of practice that I describe in this section.

ESAG produces and sells its food products to a variety of customers: retail traders, discount supermarkets, wholesale businesses, smaller ethnic shops and even kiosks. The head of sales and one of the intermediary leaders of ESAG both pointed out that their main target group is ethnic minorities in Austria and, particularly, Germany, which is why the largest proportion of sales is generated in what ESAG calls the “ethnic market”. This market is dominated by minorities of Turkish origin. In the case of Germany, which represents ESAGs most important “ethnic market” (Interview head of sales, Nov. 2014: time stamp: 0:23:04.01 – 0:25:00.5), the “Turks comprise the highest number of entrepreneurs as they are the largest ethnic group” (Kontos 2007:425). This group, however, represents not only a large customer group for ESAG’s ethnic food products (2.8 million potential customers/Turks living in Germany as of 2013 (BAMF), in addition to a growing number of Muslim immigrants and refugees), it also stands for around 10,000 Turkish food retail businesses (Aygün 2010). According to Danisman (2011), in total there have been about 80.000 Turkish enterprises in Germany in which could be said to be part of what Kontos (2007) calls the “field of ethnic business”.

ESAG aims to penetrate this “field of ethnic business” and increase its market share and marginal profits in the “ethnic market” (Interviews with IDK 1-4 and ITR1-6). Thus, unsurprisingly, ESAG’s main goal is economic success and the rules of the game are to follow certain strategies and reach certain agreed milestones and KPIs, for example, as explained by IDK4:

This is the action plan and that is then broken down into KPI’s (key performance indicators) and then further into milestones. KPIs for Germany are: Those are figures and mainly the budgets which the sales persons made themselves. (Interview IDK4; June 2014: time stamp: 1:53:06.0-2:08:42.2)

The importance of reaching certain measurable goals is visually presented to all employees at HQ in the form of a plastic cylinder which is placed at the entrance to the lunch room.

At the entrance there is a plastic tube in which the number of plastic balls indicates which KPIs and milestones have been reached. The white balls indicate the KPIs and the red ones the milestones. IDK4 informed me that this is called the “sales barometer” and with it standing here all employees can see how well the company as a whole is doing in terms of sales. (Field notes: HQ April 2014; page 8)

As IDK4 mentioned in one of our interviews, ESAG pays all the employees’ salaries and thus the company must thrive economically (Interview IDK4; June 2014: time stamp: 3:00:30.1-3:02:33.9). Using the so-called “sales barometer” not only visualizes how well ESAG is playing the economic game but might remind the employees of who pays their salaries. Thus, every employee is reminded that they must invest all their work-related skills and competencies to the best of their abilities in order to secure their own workplace. The importance of delivering one’s best to the company was mentioned by all interactants, yet only the employees with Turkish backgrounds related their job and the salary directly to securing their livelihood:

My employer is the hand that feeds me [Brötchengeber]: he pays my rent, he pays my lease, and he pays for my bread and my water. And I have to provide some service in return; I have always done it, that's an automatism. (Interview ITR4; April 2014: time stamp: 0:12:43.6-0:15:32.3)

It takes a lot of energy [because] I earn my bread by talking, with my voice, convincing people and bla, bla, bla. And once I am at home I cannot talk anymore; I am speechless and tired. I left all my energy at work. (Interview ITR1; June 2013: time stamp: 1:11:40.2-1:12:24.5)

However, this study's interactants have somewhat different understandings of what performing in the best way possible entails. I shall discuss these individual understandings in Section 5.2; in the current section, I present and explain ESAG's structures and main rationales as expressed by the interactants from HQ in order to shed some light on ESAG's *illusio*. Since Bourdieu's elements of field, habitus, and capital are intertwined, some of the aspects of the game mentioned here might also represent aspects of habitus, which I identify in the following section (Section 5.5.2).

As mentioned, economic success is one of the key goals of ESAG; hence, ESAG as a social agent strives to enhance its economic capital in the field of ethnic business and, eventually, the broader field of the economy. In order to be competitive and win many of the struggles over economic capital, ESAG provides rationales as to how the employees should invest their cultural capital in the best possible way. In other words, ESAG suggests how the rules of the game, i.e. gaining economic capital, could be mastered in the best possible way.

One of the key approaches to mastering the game is expressed and visualized by the department of ethnic sales at HQ. In its section called sales support, the game is played best by increasing both the company's and the employees' efficiency:

We work a lot on increasing our efficiency and everything has to be solved no matter how many are sick. So, there has always be someone who can take

over the other's tasks. We came a long way already and it functions well.  
(Interview IDK2; April 2013: time stamp: 0:04:00.8 - 0:06:25.1)

However, even though the company's leaders and employees must work efficiently and follow certain performance parameters, all of which are aspects of what Bourdieu calls the "economic field", ESAG combines these economic rationales with what it terms a "relational aspect":

In one way or another we have a relational approach to doing business with Germany or the Turkish segment in Germany, whereas they (Nestlé) take a commercial approach – in how many shops do we sell our products, processes, marginal return, etc. We are of course also forced to the commercial approach, but we have a somewhat different patience. (...) We are larger on our deadline. (Interview IDK4; December 2012: time stamp: 1:16:16)

Embracing the 'relational' is just one key value at ESAG that originates from its founder and current CEO. Other values seem to be a sense of kindness, adventurism, mutual respect and even fun, which appear to make ESAG a nice place to do business with, as expressed by IDK1:

Well in our company there is a good spirit. [hmm] and it is based on an very essential understanding of [name of CEO] regarding our cooperation, that he actually is a good person and he thinks that we should treat all humans decently [hmm]. And this permeates our way of doing business. [hmm] And this I think is extremely important [hmm]. This is as I said if you fancy trying out something new [hmm], people who for example started in a position s accounts do something totally different today [hmm]. If you fancy that, well then there is space for that, there has been space for that. It's obvious, the

bigger we get, the more specialized we get as well. [yes]. And then people have to take those positions they ought to have and which are needed right now, [yes], and then things get a bit harder. (...) Sometimes for those of us who have been here a long time this may feel a bit as being under pressure but still not more than, well we still can look each other in the eyes and we can all meet each other and the doors are ajar throughout the whole company [hmm]. And that is comfortable. [hmm] I like to add that this is a owner-driven company and there is still huge scope of freedom. [yes] I think that is really important. That fits very well with the North-Jutland mentality [hmm]: It's okay to have rules, but rules as such have to be bendable. (Interview with IDK1, April 2013 timestamp: 0:03:14.5 - 0:03:14.5)

Yet, as mentioned by IDK1, ESAG has expanded and the positions in the field of ESAG are taken according to the social agent's skills and competencies (*institutionalized cultural capital*) and no longer because an employee shows interest in trying something new. It seems that due to ESAG's economic growth, which could be considered one of *the main interests of the field of ESAG*, the field itself has changed along with its positions. In conjunction with ESAG becoming a more powerful and influential player in the wider economic field, it also adjusted its *illusio* to this field. In relation to this change, the specific logics of practice within the economic field became part of the social agents' habitus, which in turn seemed to reproduce the field's logic of practice. To IDK1, this change meant that employees were important by virtue of the *role* they held in the organization, yet the human aspect seems to have moved further into the background. He found this change or adjustment of logics to be in line with an American or British business culture:

And I think that is something which we have been told is important from an American point of view. [hmmm]. I think that is very American or English business culture, where there is a lot ... well, you don't even know if I'm here tomorrow and the company I work for, if that is here. [hmm] it is my job



only. Therefore, let's keep to business only [yes]. The personal part is not really important [yes]. (Interview IDK1; April 2013 time stamp: 0:39:05.6 - 0:43:45.0).

However, I did not experience ESAG's culture to be setting aside the human being; people laughed with each other, took on small private errands during working time, and generally interacted harmoniously with each other. The working atmosphere seemed to be relaxed and was also described as such by many interactants in this study (e.g., IDK2, IDK1, ITR1, ITR2, ITR4). Moreover, ESAG still seemed to be an 'adventurous' and exiting place to work at, as expressed by IDK2:

The strategy of the company, i.e. the CEO's strategy, is to be successful, but once the company is making money, he also wants to do some exciting things. The company does not stand still but always wants to do something new and exciting, which makes it an exciting company to work with. (Interview/field notes: IDK2; April 2013; time stamp: 1:29:04.6-1:38:04.6)

In summary, ESAG's interest, and thus the field's *illusio*, i.e. "the tacit recognition of the value of the stakes of the game and [the] practical mastery of its rules" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:117) seems to be the following: In collaborations with your fellow co-workers, be adventurous, show kindness and respect, and have fun in proactively and efficiently assisting ESAG in reaching and exceeding its milestones and action plans in order to become the most valued and successful food retailer in ethnic food markets throughout the world.

In order to master the game in the field of ESAG, social agents need to align with the company's culture and values, some of which I have already identified in this section, which are then translated into a variety of organizational practices. As values are a part of a social agent's habitus, which in turn influences the social agent's perceptions and actions, it can be said that the individuals', but also the company's, habitus plays a vital role in it being successful in the field of ethnic business and the wider economic field.

### **5.5.2 Habitus**

To my knowledge, ESAG is one of the few non-Turkish led ethnic food producers and retailers in the ethnic food market in Austria and Germany. How have they managed to be that successful?

When introducing Bourdieu's tools of analysis, I mentioned that social actors learn to play the social game in certain fields and thereby embody the field's logic of practice. At the same time, Bourdieu cautioned that we should understand fields as dynamic with changing and fuzzy boundaries; hence, fields have a historical dimension which must be considered (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:90) in order to understand the field's logic of practice.

In this study, all Danish leaders were raised educated in Denmark. They received their education at business schools or universities and added leadership courses and time abroad to their educational portfolio. It seems fair to assume that they learned to play the 'business' game according to their education and their backgrounds as sales persons or leaders in other Danish companies. Some of the leaders (IDK4, IDK1 and IDK3) had also worked as expatriates for ESAG for a couple of years, whereby they had, for example, experienced parts of the Arabic world. Yet, primarily, they were all familiar with and a product of the logic of practice in the field of ESAG.

In the previous section, I pointed out that ESAG is a successful actor in the ethnic market. One important indication of their success could be the fact that one of the world's biggest companies within the food sector, Nestlé, approached ESAG and asked them for a collaboration as they themselves were having problems in gaining access to the ethnic markets in Europe (Interview IDK2; December 2012: time stamp: 0:27:00-0:29:00).

Even though this study's interactants did not explicitly point to the company's success factors, I argue that these were to be found in the company's habitus (see section 3.2.3). As mentioned earlier, Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:126f) posited that habitus is

*“the durable and transposable systems of schemata of perception, appreciation, and action that result from the institution of the social in the body (or in the biological individuals) (...) And when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a ‘fish in water’: it does not feel the weight of the water and it takes the world about itself for granted.”*

Arguably, a company that considers itself to be successful in its field of operation may have a habitus which is in alignment with the field. Furthermore, following Bourdieu's thoughts, I posit that this company as a field in itself has “conditioned” the habitus of its employees and leaders over time while these have “contribute[d] to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's energy” (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:127). What follows is a company that, generally speaking, thrives as a fish in water; and it does so because it has been shaped and conditioned by a set of habitus (employees and leaders) which themselves thrive as fish in the water, i.e. in the company as such but also in the wider economic field. How then could ESAG be described? What are its characteristics that, in the words of Bourdieu, make it a “meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which [employees and leaders like to invest their] energy”?

According to the interactants, a variety of interrelated values and structures at ESAG not only make the company a successful player on the field of ethnic business but also a highly valued place at which to work. These are:

- Being a family business with family values
  - Patience, flexibility, and leniency regarding rules'
  - Dispositional trust

- The matrix structure
- Learning, living and embodying the company values
- Sales subsidiaries employing persons with Turkish backgrounds

These main characteristics are outlined and discussed in the following sections. The subsequent identification and discussion of ESAG's values and organizational structure is important as these describe the field in which the leaders and employees work, interact and take reasonable actions. Thus, practices of leadership are influenced by the field of ESAG with its *illusio* and distribution of positions and power structures. When and how trust emerges from leadership practices is also influenced by the field in which these interactions take place. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the field in more detail. This is not to say that the individual social agent is merely a puppet in the field; individual agents have a certain range of freedom in 'choosing' a reasonable practice. However, this range of 'freedom' is restricted by the individuals' habitus, their capital portfolio and their positions in the field.

#### ***A family business with family values***

ESAG itself is presented as a family business, a concept that many of the leaders I interacted with helped to develop. Being a family business with family values means that key managerial positions at ESAG are taken by family members or close acquaintances of ESAG's founder and current CEO (Field notes/interview summary IDK4 December 2012). IDK4 pointed out that:

Actually, we are a family, we have family values. And that is true as well for some of the cultures we work together with; Turks and especially people from the Middle East. We have this family values: respect and collaboration ... relations. There ought to be no difference of walking into our warehouse in [Sub DE-West] or our dairy in Austria or our office her in [HQs], it should be these values you should sense if you enter the place and are a part of it. [Interview IDK4; December 2012: time stamp: 0:36:46.0 – 0:37:05.2]

In this quote, IDK4 highlights the values of respect, cooperation and relation building as important family values. He also indicates that these are values inherent to those cultures ESAG cooperates with, i.e. persons and companies from Turkish and Middle Eastern cultures. ESAG, which considers itself a 'Danish company', has values which are also important in 'Turkish culture', as expressed by IDK4, and are thus also important for ESAG's sales personnel of Turkish origin. The majority of ESAG's employees are stationed at HQ, they see and converse with each other on a daily basis. Most of them have been at ESAG for a number of years and seem to know each other quite well. This 'familiarity' is underlined as a further strength of ESAG. According to IDK4, it leads to faster internal communication and information sharing in an informal manner, something that is nowadays called 'the matrix structure':

This Danish familiarity [yes] or what do you call it, eh familiarity, we are a family here in the company and yes, it might well be that I am higher decorated than you are but that doesn't make me, I think, it doesn't make me a better person [no, no] and that is part of a Danish approach, right? And perhaps it is also true for these working in a zig zag which nowadays is nicely called for a matrix, it is more like: what is the formal and what is the practical way of doing things; well, it might well be that I should take that way of command and ask for stuff, but it goes faster in a zig-zag. [yes]. We Danes do that all the time [hmm] and as you say yourself, when having a coffee at the coffee dispenser and when sitting at the lunch table. (Interview IDK4; June 2014: time stamp: 3:12:49.1-3:19:13.6)

This quote aptly illustrates how ESAG understands itself and in which ways the notions of family business, matrix structure and being a Danish company are combined to make up ESAG's organizational culture and tacit rules that should be followed when playing the game in the field of ESAG. As I will discuss in more detail in the following sections, it could be argued that this feeling of familiarity with one another has a variety of causes: First, ESAG is an SME and employs around 120 people at HQ. The employees meet at least once a day, i.e. during their

lunch breaks. These are often used to discuss work-related issues, thus much information is shared via informal conversations. This is possible by virtue of the relatively small size of the company. SMEs and small businesses make up over 80 % of all private businesses in Denmark, which is why IDK4 may link family values with Danish values. On the other hand, one could suggest that this familiarity is due to having similar backgrounds, as is the case for almost all employees at ESAG's HQ and thus for about 90% of its entire workforce. The vast majority grew up in the same region and all seem to share similar interests and an educational background that is related to the business sector. Within the literature on trust, a sense of familiarity with each other is portrayed as an important enabler for trust building (see e.g. Luhmann 1979, Möllering 2006, Lewicki & Bunker 1996, Frederiksen 2014).

Trust in each other was also mentioned by many of this study's interactants as lying at the heart of the company, which is why I argue that ESAG and many of its employees are endowed with dispositional trust (Interview IDK1; June 2013: time stamp: 0:48:02.9 - 0:50:33.1). According to IDK1 (Interview IDK1; June 2013: time stamp: 0:48:02.9 - 0:50:33.1), the Danes' tendency to trust others is based on the high level of trust in the Danish society, seeing that one simply can buy vegetables at the roadside and the farmer trusts you to pay for the goods by putting money into a can. IDK1 furthermore points out that ESAG is a Danish company situated in a relatively rural area that is a product of its wider social context and which has been and still is characterized by a high level of generalized trust. This account is in line with research done on generalized trust. For example, Fukuyama (1995) conducted research on so-called "high trust vs. low trust cultures". Ultimately, Fukuyama argued that the 'circle' in which each person can quite easily build fairly 'safe' trust relations is relatively large in so-called 'high trust cultures'; in contrast, it is rather small in so-called 'low trust cultures'. Consequently, in 'low trust cultures' trusting relationships are most easily developed between close family members and next of kin, whereas it is more difficult to build trust with people outside the 'family-circle', according to Fukuyama.

However, while Fukuyama's findings suggest that it would be easier and 'safer' to build trust in high trust societies such as Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and, to some extent, Germany (see social capital/generalized trust scale/OECD 2011), Frederiksen's (2012, 2014) work relativizes these statements by arguing that even in a so-called 'high trust culture' such as Denmark (according to Fukuyama), there is a variety of people one would not trust and, moreover, it would depend on the object and the actual trust-relationship whether one would even trust one's next of kin.

These assumptions seem to be backed up by statements made by the 'German-Turkish' interviewees taking part in this study. Almost all of them stated that in general there is little trust between Turks; yet they often find it easier to trust their next of kin, although this is also not always the case (see interview with ITR5). In general, my empirical data suggest that trust building in a 'Turkish working context' is harder to achieve; one actually has to earn the other's trust by reciprocating trust over a longer period of time – ITR2 speaks of "throwing a bone to the other and seeing how the person reacts" (Informal Conversation ITR2; September 2014: page 2) - whereas trust in a 'Danish' or 'German' working context is built more easily, and perhaps even taken for granted. ESAG's experiences of misplacing their trust is an example of taking trust for granted. ITR1 even points out that many Germans and Danes are 'naïve' when trusting others 'out of the blue', as my field notes indicate:

Then he [ITR1] tells me about the advantage of being a Turk in this market. He says that Danes and Germans would be too sweet-natured, too nice, too trusting to the Turkish customers. The Turks would have a higher chance of getting better, i.e. lower, prices from the Danes than from him. (Field notes; Sub.DE-East; June 2014, page 7)

Despite the disadvantages of trusting too much, ESAG experiences the high level of trust amongst its employees as *the* prerequisite for doing business; doing business, or even living, without trust would be unthinkable, at least for IDK1:

No, you cannot omit trust at any point in time. [okay]. You always need trust. You need to trust those you work together with and trust that those whom you work for are supporting you all the time. (Interview IDK1; June 2013: time stamp: 0:55:11.3 - 0:57:49.4)

In addition to trust and the minimization of hierarchy, another aspect of being a family business is related to the employees being both humble and equals, which is translated into having the freedom to talk to any other employee in the same manner. If an employee at ESAG requires information from a certain person, they simply ask that person regardless of their 'official hierarchical' position or whether they should have followed an 'official chain of command'. They take the fastest, most practical and thus most reasonable approach, which tends to use a type of crisscross style. IDK4 suggested that all Danes have almost always worked in a 'matrix structure', even though they never designate it as such. Until now, many of the interactants at the subsidiaries were not aware of ESAG's organizational structure. Neither was I for the first 1.5 years of this study. Working according to the matrix structure is simply an approach which ESAG has always used but never communicated; rather, it seems to be understood as part of the family values and therefore does not need to be communicated. Working within the taken-for-granted and uncommunicated matrix structure seems to translate as follows: An employee requests assistance of those family members (employees at ESAG's HQ) who could be considered most able to provide it. If this request is phrased politely than the other family member will indeed assist with no questions asked. These structures have not been put down on paper- yet. However, not knowing these structures can become problematic; even more so when there is an official organizational chart which does little to convey ESAG's actual structure, including its methods of 'command'. For instance, at the beginning of my field work, I was introduced to the official organizational chart. Since I was unaware of ESAG's matrix structure, I was especially confused upon learning about the way ESAG's subsidiaries were meant to communicate with HQ. The subsidiary leaders were - and possibly still are - as puzzled as I was. IDK4 even called this confusion to cause "frustration for our subsidiary in Austria where ITR3



would ask: Who is the subordinate here?” (Interview IDK2 at DE-E; June 2014; time stamp: 2:56:19.9-3:00:30.1).

While the matrix structure is tacitly used by the employees at HQ as they are accustomed to it, the employees with Turkish backgrounds do not know about it, although they do wonder why they have so many superiors. Whereas the official organizational chart pictures one central subordinate for all sales subsidiaries, i.e. the head of sales, the informal matrix structure advises reporting to several heads of the various departments instead. As mentioned, the Danish employees learned how to collaborate in a matrix structure in conjunction with being employed at a growing family business. Thus, they embodied ESAG’s values and its way of expressing and practicing these values while learning to tacitly appreciate ESAG’s *illusio*, which I identified to be the following in a prior chapter: In collaborations with your fellow co-workers, be adventurous, show kindness and respect, and have fun in proactively and efficiently assisting ESAG in reaching and exceeding its milestones and action plans in order to become the most valued and successful food retailer in the ethnic food markets throughout the world.

To accomplish being in synch with the *illusio*, the employees are somehow expected to ‘learn and incorporate’ the company values.

### ***Learning, living and embodying the company values***

With the exception of IDK3, all Danish interactants mentioned in my dissertation have been working for ESAG for almost two decades. They reproduced and transferred their implicit understanding of the field’s logic of practice to those departments of ESAG they currently work in. In response to my question of how one is to know at ESAG that the company works according to the matrix structure, IDK4 provided a good explanation regarding how he learned what rules and values apply at ESAG and how he translates them into reasonable actions:

And those of us who work at [HQs], we are broad up with it and we know it [ja]. And this is actually the reason why I say that we do not have any

pronounced hierarchy. [hmm] (...) And then we come to that which we can call owner-leadership and strong values [hmm] and this I think often about: I am safe because I know the values [hmm] and these are values I am convinced of and it is a huge value-community: Well, what would [name of CEO] have done in this situation? He would have acted like this and that. Then I also dare to act like that [hm, yes]. And that's about these values which are a basic part of our leadership and there are strong values in owner-led companies such as this one. [that's right]. (Interview IDK4; June 2014: time stamp: 2:56:19.9-3:00:30.1)

The company's values tell me how to work and therefore I don't miss a visible hierarchy but of course I do have a history in this company. I started as a sales person and learnt to take decisions out there in all the countries I worked in. And if you take a wrong decision and then come back home to HQs then it is discussed but you are not made losing your face, you are not forced to call the customer and tell them: "This did not go well; I cannot do this and that". So you have this security. But this means, that you have to know the values and you have to have lived the values. You have to feel secure in them, you might say. (Interview IDK4; June 2014: time stamp: 3:02:33.9-3:12:49.1)

IDK4 pointed out that knowing or rather *living* the company's values gives him a feeling of safety; he dares to take actions before having to ask a superior for advice. The company backs his decisions. In other words, he does not run a high risk when taking certain actions. He can trust the company to stand behind him. The same impression has been given by IDK1 and ITR1. (Interview ITR1 June 2013: time stamp: 0:32:25.1 – 0:33:37.1)

Thus, knowing the values and living the values seem to provide a feeling of security and familiarity with the company. The company culture as such seems to represent a kind of security net for the employees' actions, that is, as long as the employees know and embrace the company's main values. Not knowing the values may,

however, lead to misunderstandings. In his position as head of HR, IDK4, for example, changed the sales personnel's salary from a bonus based salary to a steady monthly income. His rationale for doing so was to provide a kind of "financial safety net" in times when sales were rather slow, which was the case in 2012 and 2013. His decision appeared to reflect the company's family values as this change in salary could be interpreted as assisting fellow co-workers. Yet the sales personnel with Turkish backgrounds seemed to interpret this step quite differently as they protested against the cessation of the bonus-based salary (Interview/Summary IDK4; December 2012; page 1). Even though the sales personnel with Turkish backgrounds embraced family values, they also embraced the notions of honor and recognition, as found in the previous part of the analysis. I assume that IDK4's approach was misunderstood by the sales personnel as being patronizing and not valuing their skills in doing business, even in hard times. In light of information received from ITR2 during a break in a sales course, IDK4's well-meant stable monthly income might even have been interpreted as an insult. To ITR2, doing business and being successful are connected to one's skills to impress and one's identity and self-confidence; and when you prevail, you have won the game of the 'survival of the fittest':

ITR2 turns to another subject, telling me that there is a saying in Turkey: Dogs don't bite dogs. A lot of animals fight without really fighting; they impress the other with their size or abilities. You need to trust yourself. And if you have self-confidence and can impress others, then you are successful, also as a sales person. You don't need to lie to people or outsmart them if you can convey your self-confidence to the other. It's the same with ITR1, when you say he can enter all the supermarkets and make orders. Why? Because he has transferred his self-confidence to the customers. But if you go to the customer and say: Please, please, then you will get slapped in the face and that's business as well. You kill to eat meat and that's the same in business, you have to impress to survive. If you are weak then you will be killed,

meaning you will vanish into thin air. Whether that's within a year or a month depends entirely on you how you behave.

According to ITR2, only the weak will vanish. Following that line of thought, I assume that IDK4's well-meant changes were interpreted by the sales personnel as suggesting that they were too weak to survive on their own. Most probably, the sales persons felt that their honor and self-confidence had been slighted. It seems that IDK4's understanding of the field of ESAG differed from that of the ethnic-Turkish sales personnel in the subsidiaries. The question regarding the salary-structure is but one incident indicating that the field of ESAG may be divided into sub-fields with diverse logics and power structures which influence the employees' practical sense. Another example is the case of the so-called MUS dialogues, which could be translated as 'employee appraisal and development dialogues'. In his role as head of HR, IDK4 administered the MUS in the same manner with the ethnic-Turkish workforce as he did with the ethnic-Danish workforce. He had to realize, though, that he could not copy the approach used at HQ and implement it at the subsidiaries because he had the impression that the ethnic-Turks would not dare to tell him, their leader, what it was they lacked and needed in order to thrive in their jobs. IDK4 pointed out that there was 'a higher power distance in the Turkish culture', which in his view resulted in the ethnic-Turkish sales personnel not telling him the truth because they might have feared repercussions. Hence, he could not assist and help them improve their work situation, and thus heighten their motivation and hence their performance (Interview/Summary IDK4; December 2012: time stamp: 0:07:51–0:10:07).

As a consequence, IDK4 changed the procedure and had a face-to-face dialogue, instead of following a clear-cut pattern of questions, with each ethnic-Turkish sales person in Germany and Austria. It could be questioned, however, whether this new approach would improve the 'quality' of the answers given or why the changed mode of communication should have an influence on the 'truthfulness' of the answers provided? In other words, ESAG was in search for a method or tool with which they could minimize this perceived 'power distance'. IDK4 indirectly

suggested that ESAG HQ must improve the communication and ‘teaching’ of its values and one approach he saw via the company news magazine, ESAGNews, which was first published in January 2014. According to IDK2, each issue would have a leader in which ESAG’s CEO would communicate ESAG’s values and since the magazine was translated into English, German, and Romanian, ESAG’s entire workforce could learn about the company values (Interview IDK4; June 2014: time stamp: 3:00:30.1-3:02:33.9). As trust is arguably constructed in the realm of familiarity (Frederiksen 2012), it seems to be crucial that ESAG’s employees are familiar with each other and ESAG’s values and that they live these values. The above analysis suggests that the Danish leaders and employees at HQ live the company values. Thus, their practices are more predictable than if they did not align their practices with company values, which should enhance chances for trust building (Gillespie & Mann 2004). However, the employees at the subsidiaries seemed to follow different values, or at least appreciated values of honor and recognition but also family, in a fairly different way than ESAG’s HQ.

These examples suggest that ESAG may be a divided company. In Bourdieusian terms, one might say that ESAG’s habitus is divided or even torn. Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:127) argued that “[t]he habitus is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field (or of a set of intersecting fields, the extent of their intersection or discrepancy being at the root of a divided or even torn habitus).” Consequently, ESAG’s habitus may be a product of intersecting fields, as I will discuss in the next section.

### ***ESAG: A divided habitus?***

In the section above, I outlined several values that my interactants embraced as important to them and the company at large (e.g. fun, efficiency, kindness, and respect).

On the other hand, in our informal conversations the Danish leaders and the Danish-Turkish trainee often used the metaphor of “the machine room” when referring to the department of sales support in which all sales activities were registered and

finalized (see Interview with ITR5; time stamp 0-0:00:38.0-0-0:03:38.4). The head of sales support, IDK2, made clear that it has been important for the company to have employees who understand that they are replaceable (Interview IDK2; April 2013, times tamp 0:07:03.1-0:07:27.4).

Being replaceable fits well with the machine metaphor, indicating that all employees have to function in order for the organization to progress and become successful. The human being, thus, is 'reduced' to being a small part in the organization; reduced to a role which has to be played successfully and in accordance with the other parts and the overall function of the machine, i.e. the organization. Social relations seem to be of little importance when doing business in the economic field, as IDK1 implied when comparing Danish business practices with those he encountered on the ethnic market where one would have to consider that there is "a family and a human being and not only an employee in a certain company" (Interview with IDK1, June 2013 timestamp: 0:39:05.6 - 0:43:45.0).

Thus, as mentioned earlier, ESAG is considered a family business following the values and visions of their founder and CEO. However, the notion or metaphor of the *family* seems to have come under pressure from the economic field with its *illusio* of profit maximization, calculation and efficiency of all costs (Bourdieu 2005), rendering the individual as a mere replaceable part in a bigger *machine*. The economic field appears to be slowly transforming the field of ESAG and thus its habitus. As ESAG grows, different positions have emerged in the field of the firm which have gradually been taken by social agents fitting the field's 'new' demand for employees with a certain capital portfolio. According to Bourdieu, dominant actors determine which capital portfolio is acknowledged in a certain field. Based on the quotes above and the discussion of the influence of the economic field on the field of ESAG, I assume that social actors higher up in ESAG's hierarchy, especially the CEO, and the 'field of power', particularly the economic field, play a decisive role in influencing the demand for a certain capital portfolio and thus the habitus of the field of ESAG. In order to fill this demand and to further "obey the principles of the economy" (Bourdieu 2005:6), ESAG has to hire new personnel with certain

skills, experiences and competencies, i.e. personnel which better fits the habitus of the changed field of ESAG. It seems that the *family metaphor* is being challenged by the *machine metaphor*, both of which are present in the language and sense-making of ESAG's interactants. Nevertheless, despite its growth, the field of ESAG still retains the logics of being a family business and the values and practices attached thereto. For example, the higher positions in ESAG are mainly taken by social actors who are related to or have had long lasting relationships with the CEO. ITR7, a sales person of Turkish origin, asserted that access to this 'higher echelon' appears to be out of reach for those who do not fit the 'family' criterion, even though they may have the right skills and educational background for such a position:

ESAG may be a family business but you don't have ... I don't know, over time I have developed that feeling that if you do not belong to the family up there in Denmark, then you will not get promoted. I mean, we [subsidiary sales persons of Turkish origin] will not climb the career ladder. Us sales persons will stay sales persons, end of story (Interview with ITR7, April 2014, time stamp: 0:21:28.2-0:23:10.1)

Following ITR7's account, even though he maintained that he had the relevant education and experience for climbing the career ladder, he conveyed that he did not expect this to happen and thus did not see a future for himself at ESAG. In fact, he left the company in December 2015. Hence, as anticipated by ITR7, he did not succeed in gaining access to a position which he considered a better fit for his skills and experience than his position as a sales person. In other words, he might not have been familiar with the rules of the game at ESAG, and thus may not have known how to ask for a promotion or how to signal that he considered it time for a promotion or at least a discussion of his career options at ESAG. On the other hand, following ITR7's account, not belonging to the "Danish family" seems to equal "staying a sales person forever", i.e. not having a chance for a promotion. In that sense, ethnicity seems to be a determining factor in career development. ITR7's choice to leave the company may imply that not being of Danish ethnicity could

almost be enough to hinder promotion. Whether or not this is the case at ESAG cannot be clearly deduced from the empirical material; however, since all employees of Turkish origin, with the exception of ITR3, held positions which, from a Danish-Turkish perspective, were hierarchically and status-wise perceived to be below HQ positions within the department of ethnic sales, might support ITR7's notion of 'Turkish ethnicity as a hindrance for promotion'.

Whereas this practice can be regarded as problematic, and was also challenged by a few employees with Turkish backgrounds (see e.g. section 5.4.3), other values and rules of the game, such as "working based on mutual trust, respect and assistance" (see interviews with IDK4, HoS, IDK1, and IDK2 from HQ and IDK3) could be regarded as rather unproblematic family-related values. These are not challenged by others in the field of ESAG per se. However, as I analyzed what is *understood* by 'trust', 'respect' and 'assistance' and how these concepts *are practiced* in the field presents a major struggle in the field of ESAG. Bourdieu reminds us that fields hold *dominant* and *dominated* positions. In ESAG, the dominant positions are taken by those holding leadership positions, including the CEO yet excluding the Austro-Turkish leader at the Austrian sales subsidiary and partly excluding the Danish leader at the subsidiary DE-W. Almost all Danish leaders, which initially included the subsidiary leader in Germany, try to explain to the other agents in the field *how* these concepts should be *understood* and *practiced*. This approach can also be understood as tacitly setting the rules of the game in ESAG, i.e. reproducing the field's *illusio*, the recognition of the "value of the stakes of the game and the practical mastery of its rules" (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:117). The leaders not only understand themselves as mastering the demonstration of respect and assistance, they are also confident of 'knowing' how to lead their subordinates in the best way, how their products should be marketed, and how their customers should be handled in order to make as much profit as possible and outdo their competitors. Since its establishment in the 1980s, ESAG has grown to become a successful player in the economic field and especially in the field of ethnic business. Its habitus seems to fit the fields it acts in; a habitus which creates schemes of action and perception,



which in turn influence the agents' habitus acting in the field and vice versa. Hence, the employees reproduce the rules and logics of the field including its *doxa*, i.e. the alleged natural order of agents' positions in the given field, of which tacitly restricting management positions (at HQ) of Turks is just one example.

Since ESAG works internationally, the field of ESAG crosses national boundaries, adding to its complexity; the sales department has to be aware of different rules regarding taxation, safety regulations, minimum wages, and maximum working time, to name a few examples. Moreover, in its subsidiaries outside Denmark, ESAG's workforce mainly comprises employees from Turkish ethnic minorities. This is also the case in the three sales subsidiaries in Germany and Austria which, besides the HQ, are the focus of my study. Hiring employees, especially sales personnel, from the Turkish ethnic minorities was a strategic choice made to connect with the ethnic market. To employ sales personnel of Turkish origin, the predominantly Danish field of ESAG invested *economic capital* to acquire dearly needed *incorporated 'Turkish' cultural capital and social capital* otherwise unavailable to them. This choice has proven to yield good results, economically speaking. However, as I will discuss in more detail in the subsequent sections, it also led to a variety of struggles in the game in the field of ESAG as the diverse distribution of capital, to some extent, explains the range of possibilities of social agents' practices and their positioning within the field. The main reason for the struggles in the field of ESAG seems to be grounded in how the '*dominant agents*' relate to the ethnic minorities' embodied histories (their habitus), which are characterized by a "multiple belonging in the context of nationally designated cultures" as asserted by Pütz et al. (2007:501). When speaking to interactants with Turkish backgrounds, all of them stated that they, in general, had no problems with belonging to two or more 'national cultures'. On the contrary, they all pointed out that they could understand and act appropriately in both national frameworks, that incorporated in the field of the Turkish family and that incorporated in the social and educational fields in Austria and Germany. While they emphasized that they were able to easily shift between these diverse frames of reference, which they understood

to be a major advantage for ESAG in the ethnic markets in Austria and Germany, the dominant agents at ESAG (almost all leaders I talked to at HQ) and the dominant actors in the broader social field (politicians and media representatives) in Austria, Denmark, and Germany ‘reduce’ the Turkish minorities’ self-understanding to being just ‘Turkish’. One powerful tool for this is what Pütz et al. (2007:501) called “ethnicizing discourses”. Instead of accepting the sense of ‘transculturalism’ that the employees of Turkish origin practice on a daily basis, almost all leaders in the field of ESAG portrayed them as ‘Turks’ and only utilized their incorporated ‘Turkish’ cultural capital in order to gain access to that part of the field of ethnic business that is dominated by businesses and customers of Turkish origin. I will go into more detail regarding these issues in the subsequent section. For now, the notion of ‘transculturalism’ and ‘ethnicizing discourses’ are mentioned to highlight the complexity of the field of ESAG and to stress that the diverse agents follow different interests, have slightly different understandings of the *illusio* of the field of ESAG, and have thus developed diverse practical senses in order to master the game. In terms of valued forms of capital in the field of ESAG, for instance, all interactants regardless of ethnic background strive for the accumulation of *economic capital*. The employees of Turkish origin, however, also strive for recognition, acceptance and belonging. Thus, to them, accumulating *cultural capital* (further work-related qualifications and knowledge, and especially recognition and acknowledgment of their ‘transculturalism’ and institutionalized cultural capital, i.e. their education) seems to be at stake as shown in the analysis.

However, while cultural capital in forms of *institutionalized* and *incorporated cultural capital* seem to represent *symbolic capital* within the group of employees with Turkish backgrounds, the *dominant* agents in the field of ESAG particularly value *economic capital* and *social capital* (in the form of having a relationship with the CEO) over *cultural capital*, even though they have realized that they need *incorporated Turkish cultural capital* to be successful in the ethnic market. However, their economic capital can be exchanged for the necessary cultural capital. Hence, because the dominant agents set the rules of the game, they also agree upon

what should be considered *symbolic capital* in the field and thus determine the field's power structures. In the case of ESAG, the most valued capital seems to be *economic capital* which is visualized in the company's accounting system, which shows each department's volume of sales with absolute transparency. This system can be accessed from anywhere and it is the main tool for all employees working in ethnic sales. ITR10, an Austro-Turkish sales assistant, stated that for him, this system is what makes him feel at home, i.e. belonging to ESAG (Interview with ITR10 at Sub AT, May 2013; time stamp: 0:25:15.2-0:27:20.3).

As mentioned earlier, the economic success of the company is also visualized in the lunch room at HQ in form of a plastic cylinder, in which the number of white and red balls indicate which milestones and KPI's have been attained during that month.

*Social capital* only seems important at ESAG if an employee wants to ascend the hierarchical ladder. As hinted at earlier, *social capital* appears to be expressed by holding a leadership position in the company and/or being related to the CEO. *Cultural capital*, on the other hand, does not seem to play an overly important role in ESAG's "Danish part", its HQ. Yet in its subsidiaries, "the multicultural part" is a highly valued form of capital alongside social and economic capital.

It is primarily along these differences that the struggles in the field of ESAG unfold as some social agents strive to change the field's practices and its *doxa*, while others seek to maintain it, and yet others are aware of being 'marginalized' but nevertheless adopt the field's *doxa* because their main objective is receiving a salary and making ends meet (see interviews with ITR1, ITR8, and ITR9).

In summary, I claim that ESAG's habitus is predominantly influenced and shaped by the field of the economy and the field of ethnic business, whereby the latter is influenced by the family field. Since these fields have different logics, ESAG's habitus comprises logics which could be challenging to combine, although this does not mean that they cannot be combined in some form. In fact, in order to be successful on the ethnic market it seems to be important to have a habitus which has

been developed at the intersection of the aforementioned fields because the field of ethnic business itself seems to represent a divided habitus. Throughout the following sections, I will further identify and discuss leader-employee interactions and practices that are considered reasonable because they appear to align with the logics of the intersecting fields. However, maneuvering with a divided habitus in and across intersecting fields pose challenges such as the aforementioned issues regarding HR practices. With ESAG's apparently divided habitus, its employees must live with such ambiguities as leadership practices that can be interpreted in several ways, as mentioned above. Thus, there can be room for uncertainties regarding how practices are interpreted and understood by various employees, which in turn may influence trust building processes. Which practices are reasonable or unreasonable is in the eye of the beholder and his or her positioning in the field of ESAG, which arguably is a product of intersecting fields and thus is formed around contradictory logics: the logics of business is business, the logics of being a supportive, trusting and kind family member and the logics of honor and recognition.

The intersections of the field of ESAG with other relevant fields and its location within these fields are broadly visualized in figure 19. This figure portrays only the relative connections and intersections of the fields. The size of the fields, their precise location, color or lining is not based on an analysis of statistical data. This figure is simply meant to visualize the intersecting fields mentioned throughout this chapter.

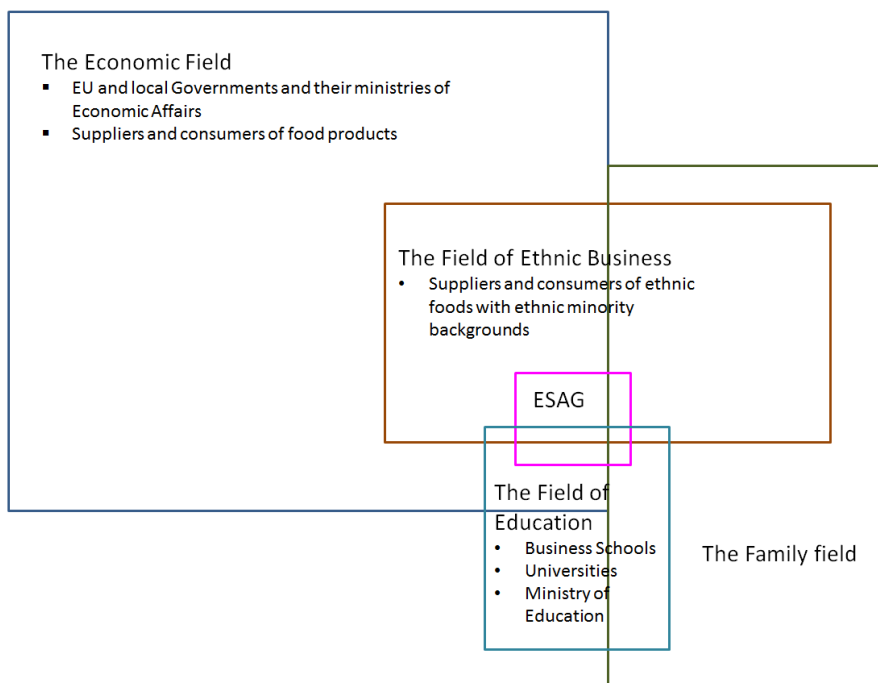


Figure 19: ESAG's position in intersecting fields

The above discussion suggests that ESAG has a divided habitus. This division seems to follow certain lines. Firstly, ESAG's HQ seems to follow a logic which could be characterized as a combination of 'business is business' and embracing family values, i.e. being a family business. The subsidiaries seem to follow a similar logic, the logic of 'being a family business'. However, they seem to furthermore add the logics of 'honor and recognition', which leads to a rationale that could be summarized as 'being a hardworking, successful, self-confident, and proud Turkish ethnic minority sales person employed at a successful Danish family business focused on employee well-being and high end quality products.' These different logics refer to different positionings within the field of ESAG. The discussion above suggests that these differences follow ESAG's structural organization, which also happens to mirror geographical and cultural differences as well as differences in the

objective distribution of power. In the field of ESAG, the positions of power are predominantly held by male Danish leaders in their 50s, some of who are related to or closely acquainted with the CEO. These positions are at HQ in Denmark. At HQ, about 98% of the employees are locals with Danish backgrounds. The working language is Danish. At the subsidiaries, which are located close to the main hubs of the ethnic markets in Germany and Austria, almost all employees have a Turkish background; they often have no business related education as they were simply hired for their knowledge of Turkish language and culture. As mentioned by ITR7, there seem to be few opportunities for employees with Turkish backgrounds to ascend ESAG's career ladder and become subsidiary leaders. However, some of ESAG's employees have taken positions between these two 'sub-fields' in the field of ESAG, thus crossing the relatively open boundaries of these fields.

The divided habitus of ESAG can be visualized as follows:

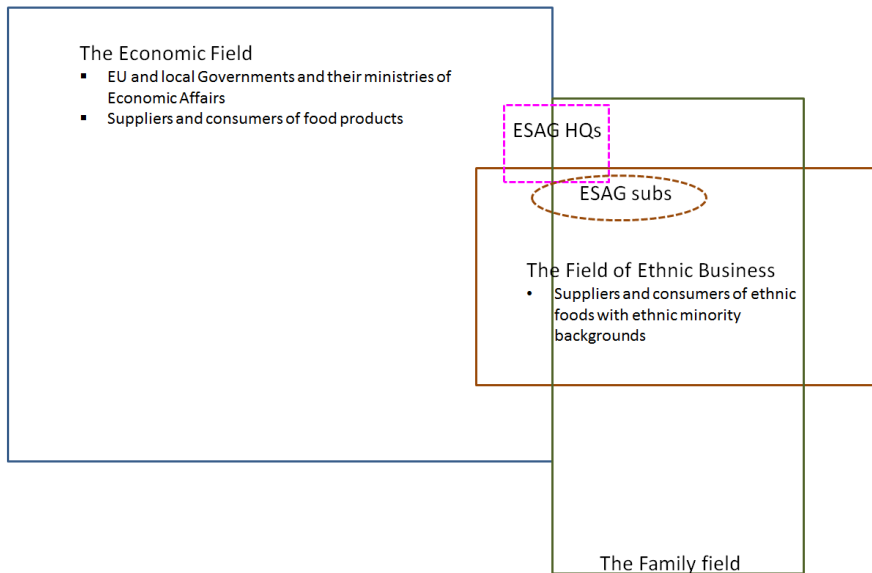


Figure 20: ESAG HQ's and ESAG subsidiaries' position in intersecting fields

The analysis showed that ESAG's leaders and employees took different positions within and between the ESAG's subfields *ESAG HQ* and *ESAG subsidiaries*. Some of ESAG's employees seemed to take positions that are more in line with the logics of the *Field of Ethnic Business* (ITR7-9; ITR3, ITR10-13, IDE1, ITR6, ITR14); others' positions seemed to be more in line with the logics of the *Economic Field* (HoS, IDK4, IDK2), while yet others moved across these logics and positioned themselves in a third way (IDK1, ITR5, IDK3, ITR4, IDK5, ITR2, IAT1, ITR1). The ambiguities of the field are, arguably, also expressed by IDK4 when asking himself:

What kind of company are we? Are we a small business in [name of town in Denmark] or are we actually a big international company? And what about our corporate language: Should it be Danish, German, English, Turkish? (Interview/Summary IDK4; June 2014: time stamp: 3:02:33.9-3:12:49.1)

Despite the struggles and ambiguities found in ESAG, the analysis indicates that ESAG managed to thrive economically. One reason for this success seemed to be ESAG's use of *ethnic Turkish embodied cultural capital* at its subsidiaries. By employing ethnic Turkish sales persons, ESAG managed to further penetrate the ethnic markets in Austria and Germany. While ESAG in that sense converted parts of its *economic capital* into *embodied cultural capital*, the ethnic Turkish workforce converted its *embodied cultural capital* and its *social capital* (their family and customer networks) into *economic capital* both for themselves and the company. In that sense, it could be argued that the investment of *economic capital* resulted in the accrue of yet more *economic capital* (what goes around, comes around). Thus, actors in both of ESAG's subfields were in the position to accrue needed *economic capital* which arguably mirrors a value which ESAG's members strived for, which is why they "invested their energy" in the field of ESAG (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:127). Besides the argument of providing economic capital, ESAG's success seems also to rest on its intermediary and subsidiary leaders' ability to 'bridge' the different logics of ESAG's subfields. As pointed out in the analysis, these leaders provided their employees with the tools needed in order to fulfil their tasks. In so

doing, the ethnic minority Turks could also fulfill the leaders' beliefs in their employees' abilities to fulfill their tasks and their integrity towards the company and the subsidiaries. In addition these leaders adapted to or reflexively drew on the subfield subsidiaries' valued forms of capital, which were identified to be *cultural capital and social capital*. By using Turkish customs, trying to learn to speak some Turkish, and incorporating parts of the private sphere into the business sphere these leaders managed to enhance perceived familiarity and, perhaps more important, they signaled to respect and value Turkish culture. This approach thus did not only enhance the ethnic Turkish employees' feeling of being recognized and appreciated (symbolic capital) but it also fostered trust as described in the analysis. Another important factor for ESAG's success is thus the company's ability to translate HQ logics into a feasible approach at the subsidiary level. In light of the diverse logics of ESAG's subfields, ESAG's ability to move in small steps, having patience and being able to choose its internal struggles revolving around adjustment to each other and best practices seems to present another important success factor. In order to move in the right direction without having to deal with constant internal struggles, ESAG's leaders drew on a leadership style which followed the notion of "freedom with responsibility" which in turns was found to be based on and reproduce institutionalized trust.





## **6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION: THE INTERPLAY OF CONDITIONS, INTERPRETATIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF TRUST IN AND BEYOND ESAG**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this longitudinal case study aimed at enhancing the understanding of trust in the context of multicultural leadership as it addresses the interplay of structure and agency as underlying yet overlapping causes for the process of situated relational trusting between Danish leaders and their employees with Turkish backgrounds at a Danish Food Company's department of Ethnic Sales. In the previous chapter I presented this study's empirical findings which addressed the leaders' and employees' interpretations and experiences of trusting alongside their perceptions of why and how their trusting changed through time. In the following, these findings are discussed in light of relevant literature and previous research, thus demonstrating this study's theoretical and methodological contributions. The chapter is structured by the following analytic categories each of which are associated with one of this study's research questions:

1. The relationship between the interactants' conditions (habitus, position, and broader contextual setting) and interpretations of trust (Research question 1)
2. The relationship between leadership practices and experiences of trust (Research question 2)
3. Perceived supports, obstacles and critical factors influencing trusting in leader-employee relations (Research question 3)

The discussion is intended to enlarge the understanding of how Bourdieu's concepts of field, capital and habitus assist our comprehension of when and how trust

emerges from multicultural leader-employee relations and its situated processes over time. Following the discussions on contributions is a revisit and reflection of my assumptions laid out in the introduction (chapter 1). The chapter concludes with a summary of this study's main insights on trusting in the context of multicultural leadership which is followed by a set of recommendations.

## **6.1 Discussing conditions for trust in leader-employee relations at ESAG**

The conditions for trust in multicultural leader-employee relations at ESAG have been outlined in Chapter 4 and analyzed in Chapter 5 taking a practice theoretical perspective inspired by Bourdieu. As argued throughout the dissertation and the analysis, a Bourdieusian view conceptualizes the interconnectedness of capital, habitus and field which is why this discussion of *conditions* for trust *also* includes Bourdieusian concepts which can be said to be more related to the agent, such as for example *practical sense* or a given agent's *capital portfolio*.

The analysis revealed a variety of conditional factors influencing trust, all of which spring from the finding that ESAG was divided into two major subfields (ESAG HQs and ESAG Subsidiaries) both of which – when and *if* recognized – were understood to be different in a variety of ways. Examples were that the subfields offered different positions (the objective more powerful positions were monopolized at HQs), worked according to diverse logics and valued different forms of capital. I pointed out that trusting was influenced by the organizational members' *struggles for specific capital as well as their individual capital portfolio*. The employees' and leaders' different volumes of capital portfolio and their diverse positions in the field of ESAG highlighted their power differences as well as these elements influenced what they understood as *reasonable practices*. The analysis suggests that both leaders and employees would trust each other only if trusting was tacitly understood to be *reasonable*. If and to what extent this study's interactants engaged in trusting

each other depended on the perceived risk (can we criticize our leader without having to face repercussions?) which in turn was related to the notion of familiarity (not knowing the rules of the game, not knowing the other). This is in line with the trust literature's understanding of 'perceived risk and uncertainty' being core elements of trust (e.g., Mayer et al. 1995, Möllering 2006). Consequently, trusting could be understood as 'risk taking in relationship' (Rousseau et al., 1998; Mayer et al., 1995) with risk being "the perceived probability of loss as interpreted by a decision maker" (Rousseau et al. 1998:395).

In that sense, trusting behavior may seem somewhat irrational: even though the trustor cannot predict or control the trustee's behavior on which the trustor is dependent in order to achieve a certain goal, he or she risks to trust the trustee and thus, accepts vulnerability in the face of uncertainty concerning the outcome of trust which led Möllering (2006) to conceive of trust as a "leap of faith". Frederiksen (2014:179) qualifies Möllering's notion by positing that trust emerges from the process of situated aligning of practical sense as understood in Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. According to Frederiksen (ibid.) "[a]ligning means that the practical sense of each of the interacting parties adapts and takes the other parties and their conceptions of the situation into consideration." Hence, the process of aligning may support trust building as it is assumed that social actors create trust from the very situated relationship by "bringing into correspondence their conceptions of the situation, their purposes and meaningful actions" (ibid. 180). By drawing on an adapted version of Bourdieu's field concept and the analytical tools of capital and habitus, the analysis of trust in this study's leader-employee relations further illuminate *what is on the inside of practical sense* and the notion of a *reasonable practice or meaningful action* such as *trusting*.

By employing an overall framework inspired by Bourdieu's Practice Theory, I was able to conceptualize ESAG as a field in which social agents struggle for the accrue of specific forms of capital, especially *symbolic capital*. As mentioned, it was found that the field of ESAG was comprised by two quite different subfields, the subfield of ESAG HQs and the subfield of *Subsidiaries*. The latter was found to

be far more immersed and influenced by logics from the field of *Ethnic Business* and the specific social field of *Ethnic Minorities* than the subfield *ESAG HQs* which I argued to be heavily influenced by the *Danish social field* and the *Economic Field*. The different positioning of ESAG's leaders and employees was found to coincide with the actors' ethnic backgrounds and their overall *volume of capital* which rendered ESAG HQ members to be more powerful than members at ESAG's subsidiaries seeing that HQ members had the tools and ability to change some rules of the game in the *field of ESAG*. In order to understand whether or not trusting was perceived as reasonable, the concepts of *field and capital* and especially *symbolic capital* were found to be useful to shed light on the agent's tacit perception of 'risk and uncertainty' seeing that misplaced trust could lead to a reduction or loss of a certain species of capital. This study highlights the importance of the *connection between agents' specific capital portfolio*, their positioning within a certain field (objective and subjective *power*), their understanding of the given field's valued capital (*symbolic capital*) and their tacit decision to *trust*. Furthermore, the use of Bourdieu's concepts enabled me to also describe and analyze power structures *beyond* the organizational boundaries and shed light on their influence on the organizational actors' practices such as trusting.

### **6.1.1 Overlapping fields and trusting**

The analysis pointed out that ESAG's leaders and employees were situated in different subfields of ESAG. These subfields followed rather different logics; whereas agents in the subfield *Subsidiaries* struggled for *symbolic capital* in form of being recognized and acknowledged as hard working ethnic minority Turks able and eager to fulfill their tasks both *within and outside the field of ESAG*, agents in the subfield of *HQs* struggled for *symbolic capital* in form of being promoted and gaining a higher professional status within the company. The analysis showed that the tools employed by agents from the subfield *Subsidiaries* in order to accrue those

forms of capital they understood to have value led to irritations and episodes of faltering trust in relation to leaders from the subfield *ESAG HQs* and vice versa as HQs failed to meet the subfield *Subsidiaries'* *logic of practice*. For example, leaders from HQs who tacitly drew predominantly on work-related species of capital (e.g., efficiency, professionalism) failed to see that these species of capital were valued less in the subfield *Subsidiaries*. On the other hand, ethnic Turkish employees who understood recognition and honor to be at stake in the subfield *Subsidiaries*, and therefore drew on a combination of work-related and person-related species of capital (their self-confidence, Turkish language, family network) irritated members of the subfield *ESAG HQs*. Hence, rather than the agents' cultural backgrounds, the different understandings of what was valued and what would be at stake in the field of *ESAG* caused struggles which in some instances led to the erosion of trust.

Literature on trust building across borders or research on intercultural leadership often suggests that culture plays a decisive role in how trust is understood and practiced (Lane & Bachmann, 1996; Zaheer & Zaheer, 2006). As pointed out in Chapter 2, the overwhelming amount of trust researchers adopt Hofstede's concept of culture which leads them to claim that culture predicts actions (e.g., Doney et al., 1998; Johnson & Cullen, 2002) and a few scholars point out that trust between culturally diverse actors can be understood as a choice made on the backdrop of a repertoire of trusting behaviors (e.g. Mizrachi et al., 2007; Perry, 2012). My analysis of trust in multicultural leader-employee relations at *ESAG*, however, shows that agents' cultural background *per se* does not determine whether they engage in trusting or not.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, existing literature on trust-building across borders suggests that organizational members might either adapt and adjust to the other culture by use of code-switching (Molinsky 2007), by employing cultural sensitivity (Shapiro et al., 2008), or by engaging in shared meaning-negotiation (Möllering & Stache, 2010), thus putting the creation and communication of shared values and purpose (Gillespie & Mann 2004:596) center stage in order to enhance trust-based intercultural leadership. Not surprisingly, thus, research on intercultural trust seems

to predominantly focus on culture as the dominant factor influencing trust in multicultural settings. By employing a framework inspired by Bourdieu, the analysis of this study's leader-employee relations, however, indicates that cultural differences *per se* only play a minor role in trust building; rather in the case of this study, trusting seems to be heavily influenced by the *tools, information and power* available to the organizational members as well as their tacit understanding of how to use these tools. Thus, bridging cultural differences in terms of a given workforce' national, ethnic, organizational or departmental differences in regard to values and meaning making, as suggested by above literature, does not necessarily foster trust.

Taking a Bourdieusian perspective therefore highlights the complexities of trust building. In order to switch codes or engage in shared meaning-negotiation, organizational members would need to decipher the code and excavate underlying meanings of actions. However, practice theory suggests that these are tacit and taken-for-granted aspects of social life which are shaped by the individuals' life trajectories outside the organization (see for example Wasti et al. 2010) thus rendering 'alignment' (Frederiksen 2012) difficult. In the case of this study, a Bourdieusian view suggests that ESAG's members were to immerse themselves in the socio-cultural and organizational (sub)fields of the other for prolonged time, in order to feel and embody the logics (*habitus*) of those fields the others have been shaped by and thus, get a feel for what is at stake. Yet, seeing the temporal dimension, even though organizational members were able to spend ample time in the organizations' diverse subfields, they would not be able to grasp past experiences made by, for example, ethnic minority Turks in Austria or ethnic majority Danes in Denmark. The close interconnectedness of organizational members' *habitus*, the *field(s)* they position themselves in and their *practices of trust* thus substantiates Wright & Ehnert's (2010:109) call for more contextualized research on trust.

### 6.1.2 The role of structure, power and control for trusting

Trust research primarily turns to objective structures to explain power issues within organizations which are understood as formal control influencing trust. Whereas the analysis indicates that control and trust are interrelated non-exclusive concepts, literature on trust and control predominantly focusses on either of the concepts. According to Weibel & Six (2013:59), “only a very small fraction of research is dedicated to the interrelationship of control and trust.” The research doing so, investigates the relation between hierarchical control and trust, with findings which are rather inconsistent. Citing Bachmann et al (2001:V), Weibel & Six (2013:62) state: “There are numerous examples in the literature where control chases out trust and situations in which trust seems to remove the necessity for control, there are equally as many examples of trust and control being complementary, or going hand in hand.” Even though trust literature dealing with the relationship between trust and control present contradicting findings, it seems to have in common that it assumes that those at the higher hierarchical position have the power to control other organizational members. The assumption of objective structures representing ‘objective power relations’ is also expressed by the interactants of this study. For example, my research indicates that HQ leaders held sufficient objective power to control their subordinates by means of meetings, the use of Axapta (global enterprise resource planning (ERP) software product), the delegation of information, and by being the main decision-makers. Yet, the analysis also revealed that organizational agents drew on *symbolic capital* both from inside and outside the field of *ESAG* which empowered them to engage in struggles over the rules of the game in their respective subfields. For instance, some ethnic minority Turkish employees (ITR2, ITR3, ITR5, ITR7) drew on their perceived safety net in form of their extended families and social network (*social capital*) and their self-recognition as successful and self-confident ethnic Turks (*symbolic capital* from *outside* the field of *ESAG*) to challenge work logics and practices *within* the field of *ESAG*. Hence, the Bourdieusian perspective enabled me to understand power not only as a concept relating to an employee’s certain position or role within a given



organization but also as *symbolic power* which I understood to influence trusting at ESAG. Employing a framework inspired by Bourdieu meant to understand and conceptualize ESAG as an open system, a *field* which itself is divided into subfields and influenced by other fields (see Chapter 5.5). This approach opens up the insight of trusting within organizations as also influenced by organizational members' situation *outside* a given organization.

## 6.2 Discussing leadership practices and trust

Based on the analysis and above discussion, I argued that many of this study's ethnic Turkish employees were equipped with a rather different volume of capital portfolio than their ethnic Danish leaders and co-workers. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, the ethnic Turkish workforce seemed to value other species of *capital* than the ethnic Danish workforce which was explained by their positions in their respective subfields and the subfields positioning in the broader social fields. Seeing that trust literature portrays 'perceived risk, uncertainty, and positive expectations' as core elements of trust (e.g., Mayer et al. 1995, Möllering 2006), an understanding of 'what is at stake' in a certain field seems to be warranted. The analysis clearly points out that trusting as a situated relational practice is always connected to the notion of capital: Social agents are equipped with a certain volume of diverse forms of capital making up a specific capital portfolio which they draw from in order to enable reasonable actions which aim at accruing more capital representing symbolic capital and possibly some sort of symbolic power. My research shows that organizational members rather low in economic capital refused to engage in trusting when they perceived this action as possibly jeopardizing their employment and thus the accrue ment of economic capital which either was invested in objects symbolizing status (e.g., a car of high symbolic value), or it was used to support family members and friends (social capital). On the other hand, organizational members high in social capital would engage in struggles over valued symbolic

capital even though there would be a perceived risk to lose parts of their economic capital and thereto related social capital. Examples are the ethnic Turkish employees' struggles for reputation at ESAG. Based on the analysis I suggest that trusting could be conceptualized as *a reasonable practice of tacitly daring to lose a highly valued species of capital which presents an essential, but not yet in abundance, available part of a given agent's habitus*.

This conceptualization of trust suggests that in order to nurture trust, leader-employ relations needed to foster the accrue of that specific species of capital which is valued by organizational members due to their positioning in a certain field. To be able to identify the species of capital in which organizational members invest their time and energy to accrue, one would have to understand the employees' or leaders' positioning *within* the specific field and, as the analysis has shown, other overlapping fields. Thus, multicultural leadership seems to face a complexity which not only would ask for reflexivity in relationship building (Möllering & Stache, 2010), the use of a common language which fosters in-group development (Henderson, 2010), or interaction and communication in which shared meanings are negotiated (Möllering & Stache, 2007) as advocated for in the trust literature taking a cultural perspective. Rather, as indicated above and exemplified in the analysis, trust can emerge from mutually embodied experiences made over a prolonged period of time. In this study, the analysis shows that trust in leaders-employee relations is further fostered by shared experiences outside the work context. This finding resonates with Wasti et al.'s (2010:295) notion of "cross-cultural differences in relationship multiplexity<sup>7</sup>" which according to Wasti et al. is a central aspect of trust-building typical to Turkish culture. The authors posit that Turks predominantly build trust based on signs of benevolence "related to intimacy and to experiences in the personal domain" (Wasti et al. 2010:296). Hence, positive experiences made in the personal domain play a vital role for trust in the professional domain. Consequently, in a Turkish business context both domains seem to intersect, with

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<sup>7</sup> By referring to Morris, Podolny, & Ariel (2000), Wasti et al. (2010:295) understand multiplexity as referring to "affective and instrumental resources being exchanged in the same relationship."

the personal domain being more salient than the professional in terms of trust-building. Yet, in a Danish context, personal and business domains hardly overlap and, as stressed by many Danish leaders, ought not to. The aforementioned issues of overlapping fields with its diverse *logics of practice* thus seem also to resonate with Wasti et al.'s notion of 'dual tensions', i.e. "role conflicts as the expectations of affective closeness may contradict the role-based expectations of work associations" (Wasti et al. 2010:298). My research indicates that especially the intermediary leaders, the expatriate and the departmental leader of Sales Support had to deal with so-called 'dual tensions' and other tensions which were argued to arise from the employees' and leaders' diverse habitus. In order to align practices across the subfields, some leaders and employees employed the other field's logics and engaged in practices which would draw on forms of cultural capital (using Turkish expressions and Turkish forms of greetings, highlighting one's professionalism and business education) which were valued in the other's subfields. These steps of aligning by learning and employing the hidden structures and logics of the other's subfields and by building shared identities resulted in higher levels of trust between the agents as described in the analysis. Yet, by drawing on a functionalistic understanding of culture as predicting actions, one Danish leader was unable to bridge the subfields' different logics. While the aforementioned organizational actors tried to achieve perceived belonging and common identity by drawing on similarities such as their professional background or joint hobbies, the focus on differences along the lines of ethnicity only seemed to heighten the actors' perception of being different and thus not belonging to the field of *ESAG*. These leadership practices led to different experiences of trust, seeing that the analysis indicated that particularly the notions of belonging and recognition were at stake for agents in the subfield of *Subsidiaries*.

Moreover, employing Bourdieu's notion of habitus, i.e. embodied history, to both agents and organizations points us to the importance of unwritten and tacit, taken for granted assumptions, rules, and knowledge of a given person and/or organization which influences its practices. The analysis showed that especially taken for granted

and not communicated aspects of ESAG HQs and the subsidiaries led to irritations and actions from both sides which were perceived as being annoying, inefficient or unfair and thus influenced trust development negatively. Hence, trust research that explains trusting as an outcome or process of ‘objective structures and roles within the organization’ may overlook possibly more important other influences shaping trust.

### **6.3 Summary: Supports, obstacles and critical factors influencing trusting in leader-employee relations**

Based on the analysis (chapter 5) and the discussion above, this study shows that trusting can be fostered in leader-employee relations where both agents support the accrument of the other’s specific species of *symbolic capital*. Hence, from a Bourdieusian perspective, the study proposes a direct connection between what social agents perceive as *a given field’s logic of practice* and thus *valued form of capital* and *trusting as a reasonable practice*. Following that line of thought, factors that may foster, hamper or critically influence trust in situated relational leader-employee interactions are those that influence the accrument or potential loss of the field’s *symbolic capital* and related thereto *symbolic power*.

It was found that *embodied mutual experiences* had the potential to **foster trust**, seeing that these experiences made it possible to become aware of given differences and to find ways to consolidate them. In that relation, the study found that *leadership practices* such as ‘translating HQ ideas’, ‘knowledge sharing’, coaching, subtle control and recognition were perceived as fostering trust. Perhaps even more important, however, the study indicated that embodied mutual experiences *outside the work-context* were understood to signal a genuine interest in the other (especially from the perspective of ESAG’s ethnic Turkish employees) and thus fostered trust. In addition, the findings suggest that *institutionalized trust* has a great potential to foster trust as leaders and employees internalized the field’s logic of ‘trusting’ into

their habitus which resulted in a high disposition to trust. It was suggested that this tendency to trust others was tacitly employed by leaders from HQs when engaging with their ethnic Turkish sales personnel. As pointed out in Chapter 5, *institutionalized trust* can also be understood as a subtle but efficient tool of control; and in combination with a lack of information sharing and recognition it can lead to stress.

ESAG's *organizational structure* seemed to present the *main obstacle* for trust. First, the structure meant that ESAG's three sales subsidiaries had to work under different conditions. Seeing that they were treated as individual 'internal customers' they had to stay within a certain budget and their economic success was measured against each other. Hence, the subsidiaries and its workforces could be interpreted as being internal competitors fighting for status in the field of ESAG. Since they only officially seemed to be on equal footing (in regard to the organization chart) yet had unequal conditions for business, the structure was perceived as unfair which influenced trust negatively. Second, ESAG's *informal structure* which followed a matrix approach was not communicated throughout the company and could only be experienced by those working at HQs. Consequently, many ethnic Turkish employees contacted co-workers or leaders at HQs who were *not responsible* for solving a certain issue or could not answer a certain question. At times these practices led HQ personnel to become annoyed which could influence trust in a negative way.

The main *critical aspects* for trust in ESAG's leader-employee relations were identified as perceived untrustworthy behavior, such as inconsistency of words and deeds, the handling of information sharing and employee inclusion in decision making and internal promotion, and the way culture was conceptualized. The findings suggest that ethnic Turkish employees wished to increase their *status* by investing their *institutionalized cultural capital* and their work experience in the field of *ESAG*. However, the subfield *ESAG HQs* which was identified to hold the entire organizational field's *symbolic capital* hindered ethnic minority sales personnel to take on higher status positions in the subfield *Subsidiaries*. It was found

that ethnic minority employees reacted differently to ESAG HQs' boundary protection: While those who identified themselves to be endowed with a high level of relevant Austrian, Danish or German cultural capital felt treated unfairly, others with a relative low level of aforementioned cultural capital did not consider internal promotion a possibility in the first place. The findings especially point to the notion of cultural understanding as critical for trusting. That is, if culture is understood along the main-stream conceptualization as a 'stable, rather unchangeable system predicting perception and actions', this study's interactants have a tendency to explain struggles as outcomes of differences in culture. If culture is perceived in above-mentioned way it can lead to communication and collaboration shutdown as described in Chapter 5. A broader understanding of culture however provides this study's interactants with a possibility to find communalities and to learn about the other's background and situation; this might foster awareness of the other's and the field's *symbolic capital* which I argued to play a central role in trusting.

## 6.4 Conclusion

This research aimed at enhancing the understanding of trust in the context of multicultural leadership as it addresses the interplay of structure and agency as underlying yet overlapping causes for the process of situated relational trusting between Danish leaders and their employees with Turkish backgrounds at a Danish Food Company's department of Ethnic Sales. This empirical qualitative study contributes to the existing literature about intra-organizational trust, in particular, trust in multicultural leadership in SMEs as it is one of the few taking a longitudinal qualitative approach in which leader-employee relations within an SME are investigated from the leader *and* the employee perspective. In applying an overall theoretical framework inspired by Bourdieu's Theory of Practice, this study adds to the understanding of the role of *overlapping fields* and *capital and symbolic power* in trust building between leaders and employees with bicultural backgrounds. This

study revolved around the following problem formulation: How and when does trust emerge from multicultural leader-employee relations and its situated processes over time?

This research found that the *habitus* and the specific capital portfolio of (Danish) leaders and (ethnic minority Turkish) employees were developed in different socio-cultural fields and thereafter (re)produced in those subfields of the company they would be positioned in. This led to important differences between the company's *habitus* of the *subfield HQs* located in Denmark and its subfield *Subsidiaries* located in Austria and Germany which had consequences for trust building across these units. This study's findings indicate that trusting within and across these subfields was heavily influenced by the subfield's *symbolic capital* and the agents' capacity to convert other species of capital into *symbolic capital* which was found to differ between the subfields. The study found that struggles were important to heighten the awareness of the subfields' diverse *logics of practice* and specific species of *symbolic capital*. The findings suggest that trusting could be fostered in leader-employee relations where both agents would support the accrue of the other's specific species of *symbolic capital*. While this finding proposes that trust could be built in similar ways across perceived differences, this study also found that the tools and potentials for enhancing each other's *symbolic capital* differed according to the agents' *habitus* and their position in the field of *ESAG*. It was found that especially *incorporated cultural capital* and *symbolic power* influenced how trust would and could emerge from multicultural leader-employee relations.

Understanding trusting as highly interwoven with an agent's capital portfolio, *habitus* and the logics of a given field renders trust research extremely difficult. It is not only the complexity in form of the above mentioned interconnectedness, but also Bourdieu's notions of 'embedded structures' which tacitly shape actions based on 'taken for granted' principles and logics of certain fields which suggest that a trust researcher should spend an ample time in the study field. Even though this dissertation is based on a longitudinal case study, which enabled me to observe changes in levels and modes of trust, I consider the knowledge presented in this

dissertation as neither relative nor objective but rather a “provisory rational knowledge (...) which is wavering, evasive yet at the same time at least temporarily valid” (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009:121). Therefore, this study’s answers as to what factors support, hamper or are perceived as critical for trust in multicultural leadership should rather be understood as being tentative, providing a new pre-understanding of the phenomenon under study. This leads me to suggestions for further research.

#### **6.4.1 Recommendations for further research**

In light of this study’s limitations (see chapter 4), I suggest further research to generate more qualitative and quantitative material to gain a more holistic understanding of how and when trust emerges from multicultural leader-employee relations and its situated processes over time. Therefore, the following should be considered:

1. A mixed-methods approach (using a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches) to a larger sample of leader-employee relations in SMEs should be taken to simultaneously discover individual and aggregated characteristics of trust, thus employing a full-fledged Bourdieusian field analysis.
2. A further similar study employing the same criteria should be undertaken among leader-employee relations in a similar SME *not* employing *bicultural ethnic minority employees* to compare and contrast the experiences of leaders and employees who have to handle ‘biculturalism’ with those who collaborate with another ethnic majority.
3. A longitudinal ethnographic study employing the same criteria should be conducted in which the researcher and an interpreter immerse themselves into the context to gain a better understanding of the employees’ experiences of trusting.



4. A longitudinal ethnographic study employing a gender and religious perspective on trust in organizational settings should be undertaken to compare and contrast the possible influence of diverse gender and religious beliefs on the understanding and practice of trust.

#### **6.4.2 Recommendations for Danish SMEs employing ethnic minority personnel**

SMEs who often lack resources and knowledge in regard to multicultural leadership should consider:

1. Clear and consistent internal communication of the company's structures, its ways of command, the given employee's area of responsibility and the expectations connected to the employee's role and position within the company.
2. Consideration by HR of the development and implementation of HR practices which take the employee's inequalities into consideration.
3. Ongoing circulation of personnel across the diverse company units to heighten the level of mutual embodied experiences.
4. Development and implementation of workshops in 'multiethnic leadership' taking a structuralist-constructivist approach.

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## ENGLISH SUMMARY

Studies on organizational trust show that trust-based work relations lead to a variety of beneficial outcomes for both the employees, leaders, and the organization at large. At the level of leader-employee interactions, trust is said to be valuable for the quality of communication and problem solving, organizational commitment, and team performance.

While scholarly work on trust points to the beneficial outcome of trust, the question as to how trust is built still occupies organizational scholars. Especially research on the influence of cultural factors on trust is still very scarce despite the fact that globalization has led to an intensification of intercultural work relations.

Considering the relatively scarce knowledge on the relationship between leadership and trust processes in general and in small and medium sized companies (SMEs) in particular, this study aims at enhancing the understanding of micro-processes of situated relational trust building in the context of multicultural leadership. In order to do so, this research addresses the interplay of structure and agency as underlying yet overlapping causes for the process of situated relational trusting between Danish leaders and their employees with ethnic minority Turkish backgrounds in one Austrian and two German sales subsidiaries of a SME I called “ESAG”.

This research takes a longitudinal interpretative case study design embedded in an overall hermeneutic approach to trust building between leaders and employees in the context of multicultural leadership. This study aims to enhance our understanding of trust building in leader-employee relations situated in real organizational contexts (*fields*) and influenced by their situated interactions (*practical sense and practical evaluation*), cultural backgrounds (*cultural habitus*) and understandings (*dispositions*), past experiences and present sense-making (*reflexivity and tacit maneuvers*).

The main purpose is to discover the leaders' and employees' interpretations and experiences of trusting alongside their perceptions of why and how their trusting changed through time. Therefore, this research addresses the following problem formulation: When and how does trust emerge from multicultural leader-employee relations and its situated processes over time?

Three research questions guide the examination and analysis of these relations which are researched from both the perspective of the leaders and the employees, thus empirically examining interpersonal processes of situated relational trust from the perspective of both interactants.

The study is conducted as an embedded case study of situated leader-employee relations and their 'practices' of trust building in the context of multicultural leadership in a SME headquartered in Denmark. The main attention is on three Danish leaders and their relationships with various employees, most of whom have ethnic minority Turkish backgrounds. Hence the focus is predominantly on trust-building between individuals (Danish leaders and their predominantly none-Danish bicultural employees) which however also cut across the subsidiary and departmental level at HQs.

The study draws primarily on qualitative empirical material, i.e. exploratory and semi-structured interviews, participant observations, informal conversations and interactions alongside organizational texts. The qualitative hermeneutical analysis inspired by Bourdieu's *field analysis* shows that the ethnic Danish leaders' and the ethnic minority Turkish employees' *cultural habitus* is developed during their upbringing in diverse *societal fields* and their employment in *ESAG's diverse subfields*. The analysis reveals that this has an essential influence on the organizational actors' understanding of what present *reasonable and legitimate sales and work practices in the field of ESAG*. Based on a hermeneutic approach to *attribute and causation coding* and resulting form a *field analysis* inspired by Bourdieu, this study shows that trusting is influenced by the organizational members' *struggles for specific capital as well as their individual capital portfolio*.

Seeing the employees' and leaders' different *volumes of capital portfolio* and their *diverse positions in the field of ESAG* highlighted their *power differences* as well as these elements influence on what agents understood as *reasonable practices*. The analysis concludes that both leaders and employees would trust each other only if trusting was tacitly understood to be *reasonable*.

In order to understand whether or not trusting was perceived as *reasonable*, the concepts of *field and capital* and especially *symbolic capital* were found to be useful to shed light on the agent's tacit perception of 'risk and uncertainty' seeing that misplaced trust could lead to a reduction or loss of a certain valued species of capital. This study highlights the importance of the *connection between agents' specific capital portfolio*, their positioning within a certain field (objective and subjective *power*), their understanding of the given field's valued capital (*symbolic capital*) and their tacit decision to *trust*. Furthermore, the use of Bourdieu's concepts enabled me to also describe and analyze power structures *beyond* the organizational boundaries and shed light on their influence on the organizational actors' practices such as trusting.

This study suggests that trusting could be fostered in leader-employee relations where both agents would support the accrue of the other's specific species of *symbolic capital*. While this finding proposes that trust could be built in similar ways across perceived differences, this study also found that the tools and potentials employed for enhancing each other's *symbolic capital* differed according to the agents' habitus and their position in the field of *ESAG*. It was found that especially *incorporated cultural capital* and *symbolic power* influenced how trust would and could emerge from multicultural leader-employee relations.

Based on this study's findings, suggestions for further research and practical recommendations for trust building and maintenance in multicultural leadership are proposed and limitations discussed.

## DANSK RESUMÉ

Studier, der handler om tillid i organisationer, viser at et samarbejde bygget på tillid har positive effekter for både medarbejderne, lederne og organisationen som helhed. Hvad interaktioner mellem leder og medarbejder angår, så viser disse undersøgelser at tillid styrker kvaliteten af deres kommunikation og problemløsning, organisatorisk engagement og team-præstation.

Mens akademiske afhandlinger påpeger de mange positive resultater af tillid, er spørgsmålet om hvordan tillid opbygges noget, som kontinuerligt optager organisationsforskerne. Forskning om kulturens indflydelse på tillid er stadigvæk ret begrænset, selvom globaliseringen har medført en intensivering af interkulturelle arbejdsrelationer.

I lyset af den begrænsede viden omkring sammenhængen mellem ledelse og tillidsprocesser generelt, og med særlig henblik på små og mellemstore virksomheder (SME), tager denne undersøgelse sigte på, at fremme forståelsen af mikroprocesser af situeret relationel tillidsopbygning i multikulturelle ledelsessammenhæng.

For at undersøge dette fænomen belyser dette studie sammenspillet mellem struktur og aktør, for såvel underliggende men også overlappende årsager til selve processen af situeret relationel tillid mellem danske ledere og deres medarbejdere med etnisk tyrkisk minoritets baggrund i én østrigsk og to tyske salgs datterselskaber af et SME som jeg nævner ”ESAG”.

Denne undersøgelse anvender et longitudinal interpretativt case studie, hvilket er forankret i en hermeutisk tilgang til tillidsopbygning mellem ledere og medarbejdere i konteksten af multikulturel ledelse. Studiet sigter på at fremme vores forståelse af tillidsopbygning i leder-medarbejder relationer i reale organisationssammenhænge (*felter*) som en proces, der er påvirket af aktørernes situerede interaktioner (*praktisk*

*sans og praktisk evaluering*), kulturel baggrund (*kulturel habitus*) og deres fortolkninger på baggrund af tidligere erfaringer (*dispositioner*) samt endvidere deres nutidige meningsskabelse (refleksivitet og ubeviste handlinger).

Det overordnede mål er at kortlægge ledernes og medarbejdernes interpretationer af og erfaringer med tillid, samt deres antagelser og forståelser om, hvorfor og hvordan deres tillid har forandret sig igennem tiden. Studiet tager derfor udgangspunkt i følgende problemformulering: Hvornår og hvordan opstår tillid i multikulturelle leder-medarbejder relationer samt deres situerede processer igennem tiden?

Tre forskningsspørgsmål danner baggrund for undersøgelsen og analysen af disse relationer som udforsker tillidsfænomenet set fra både ledernes og medarbejdernes perspektiv, hvilket betyder at interpersonelle processer af situeret relationel tillid er empirisk udforsket ud fra begge interakørernes synsvinkel.

Undersøgelsen er gennemført ved brug af et 'indlejret' casestudie af situerede leder-medarbejder relationer og deres 'praksisser' i tillidsopbygning samt i en kontekst af multikulturel ledelse i en SME med hjemsted i Danmark. Det primære fokus ligger på tre danske ledere og deres relationer i forhold til forskellige medarbejdere, hvoraf de fleste har etnisk tyrkisk minoritetsbaggrund. Fokusset bliver derfor primært knyttet til tillidsopbygning mellem enkeltpersoner (danske ledere og deres primært ikke-danske bi-kulturelle medarbejdere); disse tillidsprocesser går dog også på tværs af datterselskabernes og afdelingernes grænser.

Dette studie anvender primært kvalitativt empirisk materiale i form af semistrukturerede interviews, deltager observationer, uformelle samtaler, interaktioner samt tekster fra selve virksomheden (interne medarbejder magasin, hjemmeside). Den kvalitative hermeneutiske analyse, som bliver brugt i denne afhandling er inspireret af Bourdieus *felt analyse*; analysen viser at de etnisk danske ledes og de etnisk tyrkiske medarbejders *kulturelle habitus* er dannet under deres opvækst i forskellige *sociale felter* samt i deres arbejdsliv i ESAGs forskellige *sub-felter*. Analysen påpeger, at dette faktum har en enorm indflydelse på disse aktørers

forståelse af, hvad der repræsenterer *rimelige og legitime salgs- og arbejdspraksisser i feltet ESAG*. Baseret på en hermeneutisk tilgang til *attribut og causation coding*, og resultater fra felt analysen inspireret af Bourdieu, viser dette studie at tillid påvirkes af de enkelte ansattes *kamp om specifik kapital såvel som deres individuelle kapital portfolio*. Analysen af medarbejdernes og ledernes forskellige *omfang af kapital portfolio* og deres forskellige *positioner i selve feltet ESAG* fremhæver deres magt difference og foran nævnte elementers indflydelse på det, aktørerne forstår ved *rimelige praksisser*. Analysen konkluderer at der kun bliver skabt tillid mellem ledere og medarbejderne, hvis begge aktører forstår tillid som en *rimelig praksis*.

I belysningen af hvornår en praksis forstås som værende *rimelig* viste det sig, at koncepterne *felt og kapital* og her især *symbolsk kapital*, var yderst brugbare. Brugen af disse koncepter gjorde det muligt at illuminere aktørernes implicitte fortolkning af 'risiko og usikkerhed' set i lyset af at malplaceret tillid kunne resultere i reduktion eller tab af en påskønnet kapitalform. Denne undersøgelse fremhæver vigtigheden af sammenhængen mellem aktørernes specifikke *kapital portfolio*, deres positionering i et givet felt (*objektiv og subjektiv magt*), deres forståelse af det givne felts påskønnede kapital (*symbolsk kapital*) samt deres implicitte beslutning om at udvise tillid. Derudover gjorde anvendelsen af Bourdieus koncepter det muligt at beskrive og analysere magtstrukturer som overskridende virksomhedsgrænser og illuminere deres indflydelse på virksomhedsaktørernes praksisser; herunder tillid.

Dette studie underbygger at tillid i leder-medarbejder relationer kan blive styrket, når begge aktører understøtter den andens anskaffelse/optjening af påskønnet kapital (*symbolsk kapital*). Mens denne konklusion giver udtryk for at tillid kan opbygges på nogenlunde samme måde på tværs af de opfattede forskelligheder, viser dette studie dog også at aktørerne gjorde brug af forskellige værktøjer og potentialer for at fremme de andres *symbolske kapital*. Denne forskel var begrundet i aktørernes forskellige *habitus* og deres position i *feltet ESAG*. Det blev bevist at det især er det

*inkorporerede kulturelle kapital* og den *symbolske magt*, som påvirker hvordan tillid vil og kan udspringe fra multikulturelle leder-medarbejder relationer.

På baggrund af konklusionerne i denne undersøgelse er der forslået ideer til yderligere forskning samt praktiske forslag til tillidsopbygning og vedligeholdelse i multikulturel ledelse.





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